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THE WASHINGTON PROGRAMME

MR. EDEN, we may be sure, was not gravelled for lack of matter when he got into close conversation with Mr. Cordell Hull and his colleagues of the American Cabinet. There are only too many subjects that call for frank debate and firm decisions by the United Nations. They include the immediate and the longer-distance problems of co-ordination between the United Nations; political questions that divide Washington and Moscow; the Allied attitude to Italy and Yugoslavia; post-war problems of security, relief, civil aviation and many others. One subject stands out as urgent, alike from the military and political standpoint. Three of us are directly concerned with North Africa, the Americans, the French and ourselves. But the audience which watches this complicated drama is very much larger. It interests the Russians profoundly. Though an Allied offensive, according to Axis broadcasts, is at last imminent, the Russians are naturally disappointed at the length of time it has taken to clear the enemy from North Africa in preparation for the promised attack on "the soft underbelly of the Axis." But in addition to the Russians, the people of France and, indeed, all the subjugated peoples of Europe are waiting with painful suspense the political as well as the military aspect of this drama. We cannot conduct our operations in a vacuum. A vigilant and ingenious enemy makes use of our mistakes. He is trying to rally Europe to resist Bolshevism. But how long will the European workers who listen to his broadcasts continue to resist in spite of the desperate odds, if they have reason to fear that the victory of the United Nations may bring in its train the establishment of Fascist regimes which will differ from those of Mussolini and Laval only in the sense that they will lean on Washington rather than Berlin? So long as that doubt persists the masses who should be, to-day and to-morrow, our chief allies on the Continent, will lack the faith in our cause, without which we cannot expect the all-out aid that victory requires.

Something of this kind we hope Mr. Eden will say plainly to the State Department. At the best the political problem in North Africa could not have been easy. But it has been rendered excessively and needlessly difficult because its heads in Washington gave to their agents on the spot, more especially Mr. Murphy, a confidence they did not deserve. He had been far too long the close and uncritical associate of the more reactionary circles first in Paris and then in Vichy.

The latest news which comes from North Africa is, in its political bearings, decidedly more hopeful. General Giraud has, through General Catroux, invited General de Gaulle to a second meeting which may well be more fruitful than the first. He has defined his own political principles and policy in terms that reveal good intentions. The Republic, with its civil liberties and equality of rights, is to be restored in North Africa; the legislation of the Pétain period is to be swept away; the elected councils will function again; finally, the General pledged himself to bow to the will of liberated France, when she can express it again by a free vote. To this there was only one qualification, which may have been harmless—that economic decrees cannot be swept away by a stroke of the pen; something must be thought out to replace them. All this sounded well, but in listening to it we all asked the pertinent question: Is this Republican system to be administered by Fascist officials? The answer came promptly. The two leading officials of the Vichy period, General Bergeret and M. Rigaud, the latter a Cagoulard, were dismissed. That is a good beginning, but there are certainly others of their school who ought to follow them. M. Peyrouton has his defenders, but for our part we shall not feel easy while he heads the civil administration. It is to the good that the outward signs of the Pétain dynasty—his name and portrait on official papers and stamps—are at last, after five months, disappearing. We await further details about the restoration of the rights of Jewish citizens. We see dangers in supplying Allied equipment to coloured divisions of troops which seemed destined for use in France. Finally, we are still anxious about the liberation from internment of men obnoxious to Vichy—Spaniards and Germans who fought in the International Brigade, as well as Frenchmen. Thousands were interned, but as yet only hundreds have been freed.

Is there here a basis on which Generals de Gaulle and Giraud can collaborate and end the division into two camps of the French who will fight the Germans? Certainly these are the first indispensable steps to unity, though General de Gaulle may quite properly wish to satisfy himself that the principles laid down in General Giraud's broadcast are being carried out in good faith and as promptly as possible. It is natural to ask whether future policy ought to depend on the personal will and the relations of two generals. So soon as a civilian council can be gathered which fairly represents all the forces of resistance both in France and the French Empire, it ought to be the final authority in all political matters. But before this can happen some salutary changes are due at General de Gaulle's headquarters no less than at Algiers. It was inevitable that a movement which can work in France only underground should use conspiratorial methods. But it was not inevitable, and it is not tolerable that men who had their training among the Fascist Cagoulards should hold responsible posts in the organisation. Again, it is clear that the present National Committee which is supposed to represent the Fighting French is not a true reflection of their composition. It is not a democratic body. Any order, legislative or administrative, has effect if signed by one member of the Committee in addition to General de Gaulle. It is also exposed to the criticism that it is drawn only from the General's personal following, and that some Frenchmen now in London who undoubtedly represent the strongest and soundest forces of resistance to the German occupation, are not included in it. General de Gaulle has had the support of public opinion in all his demands for sweeping changes in North Africa. His demands were not excessive, and they were based on a correct reading of the facts. It is now for him to make in his own household the changes necessary to bring it also into line with all that is best in French traditions.

The Russian Reverse

The loss of Kharkov is a hard blow for Russia to bear after a winter campaign of almost uninterrupted success; but the extent of the German recovery on the Eastern Front should not be exaggerated, even in this sector. Transfer of divisions from the West enabled them to launch a powerful counter-attack against the mobile and probably not very strong columns which the Russians had pushed forward towards the Dnieper Bend, in advance of their main forces. Confronted with this massive counter-attack and prevented by the thaw from reinforcing their advanced elements, the Russians recognised that hope of severing the German lines of communication with the Donbas must be temporarily abandoned. They accordingly withdrew behind the line of the Donets, which they hold firmly, and evacuated Kharkov—a city difficult to defend against envelopment. They have suffered, in short, a local reverse of a type always likely to occur when a major offensive has begun to outrun its supplies; but the enemy has not succeeded in cutting the important Kursk–Byelgorod–Lisichansk railway, nor has he regained the use of the Bryansk–Kharkov line, cut by the Russians' hold on Lgov. Furthermore, as an offset to loss of ground in the south, the Russians have gained greatly from the Germans' enforced withdrawal from the great Vyasma salient which for the past year had pointed threateningly towards Moscow. Between now and May, melting snow and mud are likely to limit operations on the whole of the Eastern Front. On both sides there will be presumably regrouping of forces for the summer campaign—a campaign in which the intentions of the German High Command are an enigma. The enemy's withdrawal from Vyasma suggests that he is conscious of shortage of reserves, but his apparent determination to cling to the Donbas and Orel gives no support to recent rumours that a far-reaching withdrawal had been decided on, or even that he proposes to remain generally on the defensive.

Colonial Perspective

Each Government statement on the Colonies adds to the impression of confusion. Colonel Stanley's Oxford speech was frankly in the spirit of the " What we have we hold "; it even claimed that British rule had prevented commercial exploitation of colonial peoples—a view which no expert would support, whatever his political views. If he had said that the Colonial Office had " mitigated " the exploitation of private companies he would have been accurate. Informed public opinion was shocked by this speech. There is a growing popular interest in colonial problems, and it draws its information from real experts who are considerably more progressive than Ministers. The repercussion in the United States was notably bad; and it was, no doubt, because he knew he had made a serious political blunder that the Colonial Secretary's second speech, in the House on Tuesday, was so much improved in tone. No doubt it was easier to talk sensibly, too, when he was discussing practical points rather than the long-term issues on which the disagreement is fundamental. He dealt sympathetically and sensibly with the Jamaican constitution and the agricultural and educational suggestions of the Stockdale Report. The international view of the Government does not seem to have advanced beyond " co-operation " with the States, as Mr. Churchill took occasion to underline the next day, when he said that the Colonies must continue to be the sole responsibility of Great Britain. Mr. de Rothschild talked well on scientific preparation for improved farming, and Professor Hill made an excellent speech on higher education in the Colonies.

The tenderest spot in the present position is the Europeanised colonials, who justly resent their exclusion from control of their own countries; and it may be suggested that one path of advance would be to concentrate on educating the technicians of which the Colonies stand so badly in need. The British dependencies have one doctor to 33,000 people. We could spend the Colonial Welfare Fund no better than in training doctors, engineers, scientists, industrial managers and all the technicians which the colonial races could well produce to raise their own status and prepare their real independence.

Lively Issues in the House (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Dick Acland made history when he drew attention to a serious anomaly by opposing the writ for the Eddisbury by-election and insisting on a division before question time. He made out a very strong case for the preparation of a special register for each seat that has to be filled in a by-election. This special register would allow all those to vote who had been resident for six months or who were in the Services and had their homes there. It would obviously be difficult to get a fully satisfactory scheme for wartime elections, but if civilians were allowed to qualify by producing food and national registration cards and Servicemen to vote by post or by proxy if overseas, the present farce by which all under 26 and all those who have moved since 1939 are disfranchised in by-elections would be ended. The last has not been heard of this; it will become an even more live issue if the next Labour Party Conference should decide to terminate the electoral truce—a not impossible contingency.

The Prime Minister was visibly elated when he received three separate ovations on his return to the House on Tuesday. His pride was all the more injured by the rough way in which he was handled by Aneurin Bevan on the subject of Randolph Churchill's letter to the *Evening Standard* about the North African political situation. He had obviously been badly briefed and made some angry asides to Grigg during his cross-examination. He reiterated the right of men in the Forces to write letters to the press provided they were not on military questions. This right was news to many M.P.s and will be news to some in the Services who have not in practice been allowed by their commanding officers to exercise it. It seems very important that the Prime Minister's statement should be maintained; his son's letter, however, is obviously a borderline case owing to Eisenhower's responsibility for the political set-up as well as for military operations in North Africa, where Randolph Churchill has been serving. Bevan has the matter down for the adjournment next Tuesday.

Shipowners in the Air

The shipping interests, following up their recent manifesto against State control of their industry after the war, have now staked out their claim to a share in the future of civil aviation. It is being realised at last that air transport of goods as well as passengers is going to be of vital importance after the war; and the shipping companies are naturally anxious to have their share in it, and therefore opposed to its control by any monopoly from which they might find themselves excluded. What they do not appear to realise is that the case which they make out for the co-ordination of air and sea transport is, like the analogous case for the co-ordination of road and rail, an unanswerable argument for public ownership and operation of the key services. In the case of civil aviation, the arguments in favour of public operation are even stronger, not only because of the close connection between military and civil aviation, but also because of the plain need for a large measure of international regulation. In our view, shipping is emphatically an industry which ought to be subsidised, at any rate to the extent of taking over the various regular lines. We share the disquietude which is finding wide expression concerning the conduct of air services under the British Overseas Airways Corporation, as it is constituted at present; and we believe the future of air and sea transport will have to be considered together. Where we disagree with the Council of Shipping is in holding strongly that co-ordination without public control is only another name for licensed exploitation o the public.

Post-War Money and Foreign Trade

Behind closed doors, British and America currency experts are trying to formulate plan for the regulation of the world's monetary conditions during the period after the war. They ar faced with a sufficiently intractable problem Everybody knows that for a goodish period afte the end of the fighting there is bound to be situation of extreme lack of balance in the world' exchanges of goods and services—unless indeed these countries which cannot cover their need by sales of their exports are simply to be left t stew in their own juice. Everybody knows, ove and above this, that the fine plans which ar being talked about for raising the standards o living in the backward countries by means o economic development will in the short ru exaggerate exchange disequilibrium if any attemp is made to finance this development by continuin capitalist methods. Accordingly, the real problem is to find ways and means whereby th " surplus " countries can supply the " deficit " countries both with consumers' goods to mee the immediate needs and with capital good designed to increase their productive power—and even do this without either expecting earl payment or saddling the recipient countries wit intolerable burdens of international debt. Thi difficulty, formidable at best, will be made les to the extent to which it is possible to restor multilateral exchanges and to prevent internationa trade from being forced into the strait-jacket of bilateral system. The root question therefore i whether it is practicable to devise some sort o multilateral clearing system which will ensur that the creditor countries invest their tradin balances abroad in terms not too onerous to th " deficit " countries. In the last resort, thi means America; and everything depends on th terms on which the Americans are prepared t " play." Mr. Wallace's recent speeches sho that he is fully prepared for the United State to play its part. But will Mr. Wallace get hi way? There is another powerful school o thought that is all against American investmen abroad, at all events in any except the strictes commercial terms—and that is merely the sam thing as opposing it altogether. What must no happen is that this country should tie itself no to monetary arrangements which are workabl only on the assumption of the Americans " playing," and then find out that the Americans ar not prepared to " play " after all.

The A.F. of L. is Still Obstructing

Sir Walter Citrine has come back from th United States not an inch farther on toward the realisation of Trade Union unity betwee Great Britain, America and the Soviet Union The American Federation of Labour still no only refuses to have any dealings with the Sovie unions, on the ground that they are not really independent of the Soviet Government, but als refuses to allow the British Trades Union Congress to have any dealings with the Congress o Industrial Organisations or with the Railroad Brotherhoods, which are both eager to come int a federal arrangement with the British an Soviet movements. It is, of course, for th A.F. of L. to make up its own mind what attitud to take up towards the Russian Unions, an nobody can force its hand if it refuses. But it i difficult to swallow the A.F. of L.'s veto on a contact between the British T.U.C. and th Trade Union bodies in the U.S.A. which take different view. After all, the C.I.O. is quite a big as the A.F. of L.—to say nothing of the fac that it is infinitely more progressive; and th situation will become intolerable if the reactionar attitude of the A.F. of L. towards Russia i allowed both to block the formation of th proposed Anglo-American-Soviet Trade Unio Committee and to keep the C.I.O. and possibl the Railroad Brotherhoods outside the Inte ational Federation of Trade Unions. We annot feel that Sir Walter Citrine was right in ccepting the A.F. of L.'s veto in his having any egotiations at all with the C.I.O., or with any ody of American Trade Unionists except itself. Where conditions are normal, there is something o be said for the view that the I.F.T.U. shall ecognise one, and only one, Trade Union centre n any single country. But when such a policy eads to such stultification of effort as it appears o involve in the present case, common sense ught to take precedence over punctilio; and e sincerely hope that the General Council will egard the matter in this light when Sir Walter eports to it the failure of his mission.

ondon's Electricity

The London and Home Counties Joint Elecricity Authority has recommended that all ectrical undertakings in the metropolitan area e unified under public control. This common-ense recommendation has already provoked iolent refutation from some of the interests nvolved, as well as from a section of the financial ress. As far as we are able to judge, the protests e based not on the view that the public is better erved as things are—a view which it would not e easy to uphold—but on the fear that the ompensation may not be big enough to satisfy e interests concerned. There are at present n Greater London no fewer than 75 separate ectricity concerns. Some of them occupy istrict territories; but in other cases even houses next door to each other are supplied from different sources and without any common standards at all. It has been plain for many years past that unification is desirable; but this, like so many other desirable reforms in the sphere of electricity supply, has been held up by the battle of interests. The municipal concerns naturally refuse to be absorbed by the undertakings which are run for profit; and there are also conflicts within the two groups over price-policy and such matters as the desirability of the cheap, all-electric house system adopted in some areas. The London and Home Counties Joint Electricity Authority (the name is, by the way, a misnomer, for it has very little authority) was set up after the last war with the object of introducing some order into the chaos of areas, standards, and price-policies; but it has not been able to achieve a great deal. The MacGowan scheme, prepared some years before the war, included a large measure of unification; but it was barred because the Government refused to face the conflict between the private and the municipal interests. From the hubbub aroused by the Joint Authority's resolutions, it appears that the private interests are still determined to fight for their pound of flesh. They want, if they are taken away, to be compensated for the profits they would have hoped to make if they had been allowed to go on to the end of their charter periods. Compensation on such a basis would saddle the public with heavy debt burdens and prevent it from getting the cheap electric current it needs.

INTEGRITY OF PARLIAMENT

UST why Mr. Attlee should be annoyed with ir Richard Acland for demanding an up-to-date rit for the Eddisbury by-election we do not retend to know. Mr. Attlee is often obscurely nnoyed in these days. The substance of his reply o Sir Richard was familiar rather than conincing. He said that a report on electoral achinery was already under consideration, and ade it clear that the Government had other, ore important, things to worry about. True. ut it manages to think about some much less mportant matters, and the time required to ecide on a revision of the electoral register hould not prove a serious embarrassment. The eport of the Vivian Committee on electoral achinery has in fact been in the Government's ands for the last three months. It may easily emain there, and the time required for decision unlikely to be found unless someone like Sir ichard Acland does the unorthodox thing and akes a fuss.

The question of the out-of-date register is not ivial. The prestige and future of Parliament involved, and Mr. Attlee, we know, would not egard that as trivial. Does the Deputy Prime inister wish the younger generation to regard arliament as a senile institution in which no e young enough to act need be interested? here are plenty of ambitious leaders waiting to aint that picture. No special genius is required o make it look lifelike to the uninstructed. The egister was last revised before the war—which eans that no one under 25 has a vote. This is self an excellent reason for demanding a revised egister. But that is only the beginning. A large roportion of those who voted in the last election e in the Forces or have been evacuated for one ar reason or another to a different constituency. hus in each by-election the actual number of igible voters is small, and a large part of the cal residents, who should have a very active terest in the results of the poll, know from the tset that as non-voters they need not worry to sten to the competing candidates. No wonder e impression from many constituencies is that an apathetic electorate. The voters are, in ct, much less apathetic than they appear to be; e percentage of those who can and do vote is ry much higher than appears from statistics at do not make plain what proportion of the old electorate is in the constituency. The real constituents, the thousands of active men and women in the Services or in factories who have come into the area stand by disfranchised. There is no technical difficulty in giving these people votes. Ration books solve the problem. Indeed, we are told that before long we are to have ration books which include electoral forms, presumably for a general election some day. Sir Richard's proposal is merely that we do not wait for this general election, but make a reality of the by-elections as they come along.

The Government's reply is presumably that they do not approve of fighting by-elections in wartime. Well, they can face the fact that those elections will be fought, and they should be grateful to anyone who, like Sir Richard Acland, offers constituencies serious candidates with an honest and serious programme. The alternative during the political truce is an increasing number of persons, self-seeking candidates invoking election cries that they think will be popular without regard to their effect on the electorate or the possibility of their adoption. We can imagine no more tempting opportunity for the Fascist than a Parliament like the present. It was elected eight years ago on issues that can with difficulty be remembered. (Mr. Baldwin promised us peace and "sanctions" to stop Mussolini in Abyssinia). It has renewed its own life on three occasions. Many of its Members are elderly. Significantly and disastrously the age level of the Party to which Mr. Attlee belongs is higher than that of the Conservative Party. In so ancient a Parliament by-elections must occur with increasing frequency; does Mr. Attlee really think the right way of maintaining Parliamentary democracy is for a Parliamentary vacancy to mean only that another old Party hack is comfortably pensioned off? And if he argues from the evidence before him that in fact the by-elections will be fought does he think that the young public and the war public should be excluded from voting? A grey-headed Parliament and a middle-aged and dwindling electorate? It sounds good meat for the enemies of democracy. Sir Richard will do well to press his proposal at each by-election. Sooner or later even Mr. Attlee, who always sees a point, can be induced to admit its justice.

MUST WE STARVE TO EAT?

THE economic basis of the case being made against the Beveridge Report appears to be this. "If we give people enough to eat we shall all starve to death."

The argument is, no doubt, brilliantly made, but it is a little too paradoxical for my plain and simple mind. All the same, any amusement at the arguments of our opponents should not prevent those of us who wholeheartedly support the Report from analysing what is behind the above remarkable proposition. Translated into economic terms, what the anti-Beveridgers are saying is, I take it, something like this. "The Beveridge Report must, directly or indirectly, increase our costs of production. However you adjust the financial burden you are bound to make the production of, for instance, coal, engineering products, textiles, motor cars, aircraft and all our other characteristic exports, dearer. After the war we shall in any case have a tremendous struggle to hold our own in the markets of the world. Having lost our foreign investments, we shall be entirely dependent upon our ability to export, in a fiercely competitive world, in order to pay for our imports. Anything which raises our costs of production imperils our capacity to export and so to pay for our imports. And unless we can pay for our imports we shall all starve to death. Q.E.D."

The first thing to notice about this argument is that, *given its own premises*, it is true. Moreover, it is true not only of the Beveridge Report but of every conceivable method of raising the national standard of life, be it higher wages, subsidised houses, shorter hours or any kind of improvement in any of the social services. In a word, anything which increases the *incomes* of the mass of the population must increase the *costs* of production. For incomes *are* costs—or, more exactly, wages and salaries plus rent and interest—all incomes except profits—are costs (and in the ultimate analysis they are the whole of costs). But see what this means. It can mean nothing, except that *so long as we continue to arrange matters as at present*, victory in international trade must go, other things being equal, to the country which can reduce the income of its citizens (and so its costs of production), to the lowest possible figure. *Ceteris paribus*, the country whose workers can manage with the lowest possible amount of food, clothing and shelter, will always defeat all comers in the struggle for markets. Such a country of enforced banting will alone be able to export. Therefore the only way for an exporting country to feed its citizens is to reduce them to the lowest possible standard of life compatible with working the longest possible hours. Q.E.D. again. Naturally there are qualifications to all this. *Cet.* are never *par.* except in the text books. A higher level of industrial efficiency, better mechanisation, long established commercial connections, ability to offer loans to customers, etc., etc., may, and often do, enable a country with a high standard of life to compete successfully with a country with a much lower standard of life. For the greater productive efficiency more than offsets the lower pay (of all kinds) to the workers, and so results in lower net costs of production. For example to-day American workers, with the highest wages and standard of life in the world, can produce motor cars at lower costs than, probably, any other workers in the world, however low-paid (including, for instance, Oriental workers living on a bowl of rice a day).

Nevertheless this does not even qualify the *tendency* of a lower national standard of life to increase, and a high standard of life to decrease, a nation's competitive power in the markets of the world, *so long as trade is carried on on the basis of uncontrolled international competition.* Moreover, it is undeniable that some (though not all), of those special advantages which have in the past enabled us to raise our standard of life and yet at the same time to continue to compete with lower standard of life countries, have disappeared, or are disappearing. In future, to a gradually, but steadily increasing, extent we shall have, if we continue to play it at all, to play the game of international competitive trade on roughly equal terms with everybody else. Consequently, however self-interested and profit-seeking may be the motives of those who say so it will be impossible to deny that every increase in the national standard of life will tend to hinder, and every decrease will tend to help our competitive power in the export markets: that is undeniable *so long as we conduct our international trade on the basis of a competitive, free-for-all scramble.* In such a contest the prize is bound to go (*ceteris paribus*) to the country whose workers can live upon the lowest number of grains of rice in their feeding bowls. They, and they alone, will be able to knock out their competitors in the export markets: they, and they alone, will (the argument runs) be able to import their necessary foodstuffs and raw materials. They, and they alone, will, therefore, be able to avoid starving to death; for they will have taken the precaution of giving their populations practically nothing to eat. "Winner takes nothing."

It is surely an excellent thing that this major issue has been raised, early in the day, over the Beveridge Report. For it will underly the struggle not merely for this, but for all the other social reforms, which will be proposed for the post-war world. A choice lies before us. Are we to return to unregulated external trade, at the mercy of the anarchic forces of international competition? In that case we shall find that our national standard of life is limited, not by the only real limiting factor, namely what we can produce, but by the costs of production of other nations with whom we shall be struggling in the world market. We shall enter with them on a race for exports, and consequently for what is quaintly called "national wealth," conducted by means of a competition in mass impoverishment. In such a future neither the Beveridge Report nor any measure designed to increase the national standard of life can have a place.

The alternative is to remodel our existing war-time controls over (i) the export of money and capital and (ii) the export and import of goods, to suit our peacetime needs. Those controls must not be used to cut us off from international trade, and so set up some unnecessary and wasteful system of autarchy. No doubt we could, to a large extent, make ourselves self-supporting. But why should we? There are half a dozen nations as anxious to sell to us as we are to buy from them. No doubt "Britain could feed herself." But if she did, what would happen to the unfortunate Argentine stock breeders, New Zealand dairy farmers and Canadian wheat growers?

Let us rather grow a sensible and substantial proportion of our own food at home, and let us satisfy by means of home production much the greater part (as we do now) of our other needs. Then we will set aside a proportion of, for instance, our engineering, coal, vehicle, textile and other productions, with which to pay for that part of our foodstuffs and raw materials which we may decide that it is convenient and advantageous to buy from abroad. Nor shall we fail to point out to the farmers and stock-breeders of the Antipodes and the Americas that, with the best will in the world, we cannot continue to buy their food from them unless they buy our finished products from us. Then "the terms of the trade" can be settled by direct negotiation.

In such a future as this we shall not, of course, be able to raise our standard of life beyond what will be provided by (*a*) our "retained" home production of consumers' goods; (*b*) the volume of imports which we find in practice that those goods and service which we desire, and are able, to sell abroad, will buy. No economic system conceivable can do more than that. But in such a future we shall be freed at last from the intolerable obstacle to all social progress which presents itself so long as we insist upon entering for the "grow rich by starving yourself to death" stakes, run off on the old "competitive international trade" racecourse.

JOHN STRACHEY

A LONDON DIARY

In a world which every day grows lamentably more like Candide's, how many ideas for which we are fighting can be traced back to their source in the sparkling mind of Voltaire? It is just over two hundred years since he lived in London and for the first time presented us to Europe in modern dress.

Of all his writings those which bear most upon the present day are to be found in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, and one of our publishers would be doing a service if they could reprint the two-volume Garnier edition with the admirable introduction by Julien Benda. Writing years before the war, he says: "A question often arises when we read the Dictionary—Whom is the author getting at? When we see him cripple with blows the religion of force, the poetry of blood, the hero cult, the contempt for the universal, the superstition of the Past we are forced to ask ourselves which of his contemporaries he has it in for. Nobody, not even the poets, in 1760 sang of the holiness of war, of nationalist differences, the abasement of reason, the mystique of force, the worship of the land and the dead. These things date from Hegel, Nietzsche, Barrès, and Sorel. On many a page we feel that the cannon balls of Voltaire fall above all on the men of our time . . . Goethe says somewhere that the true sign of genius is a posthumous productivity. Voltaire has, by the natural expansion of his work, produced the adversaries who were not to appear till a century and a half later, and whom he has answered."

* * *

Dipping about in the Dictionary, where all is lucidity, gaiety, intelligence and courage, I came on the article "*Liberté de Penser*," a short dialogue on the Inquisition between two wounded officers, Lord Boldmind and Count Médroso, who are taking the waters in the Pyrenees. Here is the conclusion:

> *Boldmind*: Anybody can educate himself.
>
> *Médroso*: They say that if everyone thought for themselves there would reign complete confusion.
>
> *Boldmind*: Quite the opposite. When we go to the theatre we all say what we like and the peace is kept; but if some insolent protector of a bad poet wished to make all people of taste find good what seemed to them bad, then the whistling would start, and the two sides would throw apples at each other. as happened once in London. It is the tyrants over the intelligence who have caused part of the misfortunes of the world. We have only been happy in England since everyone freely enjoyed the right to say what he thinks.
>
> *Médroso*: We are also very peaceful in Lisbon, where no one can enjoy that.
>
> *Boldmind*: You are peaceful, but you are not happy; it is the calm of galley-slaves, who row in rhythmical silence.
>
> *Medroso*: You think then that my soul is in the galleys?
>
> *Boldmind*: Yes; and I wish to set it free.
>
> *Médroso*: And if I'm quite comfortable in my galley?
>
> *Boldmind*: In that case you deserve to stay there.

* * *

These last few lines are like a neat chess-ending, but it is not their crispness which has been haunting me. Voltaire set his dialogue for 1707. What would he find if he came here to-day? Innumerable Mr. and Mrs. Stoutheart's, of whom he would be justly proud. But what has happened to Milord Boldmind? One can imagine the headlines.

"Famous Swiss journalist arrives in England. Guest of Lord Coalmine. Worth three divisions.

"François Voltaire, the famous Swiss journalist who occupies a position there somewhat similar to Hannen Swaffer's, has arrived in this country, and will be the guest of Lord Coalmine, the regional commissioner, at Goslow. 'I have no plans,' said M. Voltaire, 'I want to see my old friends and revisit my home at Wandsworth, which I hear has been blitzed.'

"Voltaire to broadcast! To-night's postscript will be by Mr. Frank Voltaire . . . Owing t an indisposition to-night's postscript by Mr. Voltaire has been postponed, and instead there wi be a recording of a talk by Lord Elton.

"Voltaire on Brains Trust. The Spanish Ambassador, the Papal Nuncio, the *Catholi Herald*, and the Irish Representative hav protested against the inclusion of Mr. Voltair in the Brains Trust. Statement in Parliament 'While nothing personal is intended it is felt tha the inclusion of a non-British subject on th Brains Trust might set an unfortunat precedent.'

"Voltaire leaves Lord Coalmine. No statemen to make. M. Voltaire, 'For once, I have nothin to say.' 'A purely private affair,' says Lor Coalmine.

"Voltaire to preach. The Rev. M. T. Pew, rector of a large church has invited M. Voltair to deliver a lay sermon. 'In these days when th church has a mission to perform and it is absolutely essential to obtain a congregation, I hav taken the unusual step of asking M. Voltaire t speak and tell us quite frankly what he thin is lacking in the Church of England.' Outbrea in church. Home Guard called out. Swis journalist claims extra territorial rights. Aspersions on Abraham. Rector's indignation. 'Remove this Trotskyite spy.'—*Daily Worke* 'M. Voltaire's place is in the Pioneer Corps.'—*Truth*.

"Voltaire to join the Free French. 'We Charles de Gaulle, are delighted to welcome t our ranks the Sieur de Voltaire to serve in th capacity which shall be dictated by us.' Voltaire leaves Free French.

"Voltaire for America. M. de Voltair whose arrival here caused such a stir some wee ago, is to go on a lecture tour to the Unite States, where he will be the guest of Mr. Bertran Russell. 'I am looking forward to findin among the free Iroquois a better world tha Carlton Gardens,' said M. de Voltaire, at the Rit

"Stop Press.—Peer's home raided. Acting o anonymous information Ministry of Food officia raided the mansion of Lord Coalmine, regiona commissioner and found part of a ham, a bottl of Oxo, and two tins of birdsnest soup. A apology was made.

"M. de Voltaire, whose American trip has bee cancelled arrived to-day in Switzerland. 'I wa growing anxious about my garden,' he said."

* * *

This may be an exaggeration, yet we canno but agree with Frederick the Great, after his deat "*Je lui dis, Divin Voltaire, ora pro nobis.*" Fo although England has become again the heroi country which Voltaire knew in his youth it i lacking in the quality of bold-mindedness whic he attributed to it. The Liberal Party, the hei of the great Whig traditions which did so much t form the youthful Voltaire, and so precipitat the French Revolution, still maintains the principles for which he fought, but lacks the courag of them. The Labour Party does not thin boldly for itself, and there is no party in whic the love of truth for its own sake is not no vitiated by political tactics. We forget that th great truths of liberty, tolerance and justice fo which our ancestors fought were not casua themes of the day but hard-won lessons painfull won from centuries of bitter struggle and oppression. They represent the only way out from th permanent vendetta which life becomes whe governed by racial instincts and mass-phobia If we lose the intellectual courage of Renaissanc man in our long struggle with totalitarianis we lose the primary emotion—the fuse trai —which fires all the discoveries of art an science and morals by which we can improve o lot. All the physical bravery and technical ski of our country are useless without the politica wisdom and invention of our forefathers. Wh would have shocked Voltaire most, disillusione though he was, would have been the apath and the timidity with which we accept o role as saviours of Europe and masters o our own destiny. The partial rejection of th Beveridge Report would have seemed to him natural compromise of party politics. The complete resignation with which such a rejection is accepted by ninety per cent. of those who would most benefit from it, that he would not understand.

* * *

I talked this week with two intelligent young men, one a private in the army, the other an army lecturer. The lecturer, who speaks chiefly on Hitler's new order said he had had one question on the Beveridge Report in thirteen lectures. He said the most representative questions he received were "Are the Germans really starving?" "Do they really commit atrocities?" "Isn't Hitler right to treat the Jews like he does?" "Are the Germans better off since Hitler came?" He recorded a case where some W.A.A.F.'s asked to say how many members of parliament there were had guessed "eight" and "twelve," and said the most intelligent audience he had met were the boys of a famous military public school. The private said the men were too tired for lectures, and that their favourite topics were (1) leave; (2) spit-and-polish, whose recent increase was the cause of great ill-feeling. For the army training itself he had nothing but praise. While the lecturer noticed anti-Semitism everywhere, the private confined it to the middle classes, and found it most rife in the O.C.T.U. He found that individual Jews were always popular, but that anti-Semitism itself ran over everybody like a disease.

Once again the problem that Voltaire faced arises, how to make what we all know to be right fresh and interesting. Something, despite all our achievements in this war, is weighing down on us, is keeping us from thinking clearly, acting promptly and wisely. "Too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart . . ." When all Europe looks to us for liberation, when we should have ideas to export as dangerous, as delightful, as irresistible as those which Voltaire drank in, we are sinking back into the past, relying only on patriotism, cut off from those in other countries who think as we do, distrusting our intellectuals (Voltaire praised England as the country where Addison, Gay, Congreve, Newton and Prior all achieved high offices of state), letting "I dare not wait upon I would" on a rubber stamp, and—*O divin Voltaire*—allowing our allies to conduct their private gestapos on the soil where, on arrival, every runaway slave became by law automatically free.

CYRIL CONNOLLY.

PEACE AIMS

"There has been a good deal of what might almost be called humbug about much of this post war oratory."—*Manchester Guardian* Feb. 27th.

THE nations of the Grand Alliance,
  Their separate interests kept in mind,
Proclaim unqualified compliance
  With plans for bettering mankind.

Engaged to carry to fruition
  The promise of the age of gold,
They waive imperialist ambition—
  But what they have they mean to hold.

Old systems fighting for survival,
  With progress still wage endless feud
While each pretends the rest to rival
  In projects for the common good.

Habituated to disguise,
  The spokesmen of united nations
Their aims omit to advertise,
  And only tell their aspirations.

SAGITTARIUS

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SOCIALISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

MANY socialists seem to have a prejudice against the leaving of anything which can be managed collectively—that is, by elected persons or by officials appointed by elected persons—to individual initiative and individual responsibility, even when such individual action in no material way interferes with the equal liberties of others. This prejudice is especially common among "planners", who often seem more concerned that everything shall fit in neatly with the plan than that it shall accord with the desires and inherent interests of most ordinary persons. Yet, as Barbusse said, "the human reality is the individual . . . and every collective organisation of men must come back to the individual man, be quickened by the individual life, and respect individual autonomy to the fullest possible extent"; or, as Mr. Cole has put it: "A human being as an individual is fundamentally incapable of being represented. He can be represented only in relation to some particular purpose or group of purposes." Another independent-minded socialist, Mr. Robert Dell, has warned his fellow-socialists that "one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of Socialism is the fear that Socialism would destroy personal liberty. The objection is not met by pointing out that for the large majority of mankind personal liberty does not really exist in present economic conditions. That is true; but the fact that it is true is one of the strongest reasons for altering the conditions."

It has always seemed to me that the importance, even the sacredness, of the individual and, equally, of his rights, duties and responsibilities, is the very essence of the Christian-social ethic and of real democracy. Individual differences are to nearly all of us the most interesting phenomena of human life. It is such that make possible all forms of art; and it is the fruit of such individual idiosyncrasies as have struck and taken root that makes up a large part of our social inheritance.

I have just been reading Dr. Stark Murray's "Health for All,"* which is described on the cover as "a practical scheme for a complete socialist medical service"; and on the whole a very good and well-informed book it is. Dr. Murray is the editor of the interesting journal called "Medicine To-day and To-morrow." This deals mainly with medical politics and medical planning, and provides a forum for many differing views. With nine-tenths of *Health for All* I, and probably the great majority of doctors to-day, heartily agree; especially with the contention that a complete medical service, domiciliary and institutional, general practitioner, technical specialist, hospital and convalescent home, should be available for every individual in the country, old or young, according to their several needs and regardless of their several means. This, of course, involves a considerable instalment of economic Socialism. There will be general agreement, also with the statement that the field of health is very much larger than the field of medicine, which latter it is the doctor's business to cultivate. A consideration of nutrition, for example, would, as Dr. Murray says, "carry those responsible for a positive health programme into other important subjects; for we cannot discuss nutrition without considering the agricultural policy of the country, without deciding whether it is better to grow food here or import it from abroad, without, indeed, considering the whole national policy in relation to overseas trade, and without deciding (if the investigation revealed such a fact) that the political and economic policy of the country was not that likely to preserve the health of the nation."

Apparently the author also agrees with almost universal medical opinion, that the general practitioner must form the basis of any organised medical service; because, without his guidance, it is impossible for the ordinary patient to know what his symptoms indicate—whether hospital or specialist treatment is called for; or even should specialist help be indicated, in what particular branch of medicine or surgery an expert is needed. At the same time, Dr. Murray would seem to demand from the general practitioner a completeness of knowledge beyond anything that could be claimed by even the most eminent physician or surgeon to-day. "The treatment of the sick person," he writes, "is a purely medical problem, and one which should not be undertaken, indeed should not be legally permitted, except by those who have a complete understanding of all the multiplicity of diseases that attack the human body." But it is over the question of the relation between the general practitioner as an individual doctor and his patients as individual men and women that a large number of doctors and of ordinary citizens will disagree with him. Within the national system which is now in operation under the Health Insurance Act, there exists what is called free choice of doctor; that is to say, every insured person is free to choose as his family doctor any man or woman practising in his district, though there is no direct financial relation between them. When the Health Insurance Act was passed and the so-called panel system was introduced, it seemed to me that here was an interesting experiment, combining economic collectivism with individual liberty. But, like so many socialist planners, Dr. Murray regards this freedom of choice by the individual of the doctor who shall attend him in illness and advise him in health, as stupid and calculated undesirably to complicate the tidy medical organisation he would like to see established. He has nothing but contempt for those who argue that patients should be allowed to choose, and that if "a large number pick on a particular doctor, he should obtain some additional payment for the number of people who had in this way put their names on his list." He recognises that "the present generation will, however, retain part of this free-choice fetish for some time, and," he allows, "there is no reason why arrangements for it should not be made; but," he adds, "none at all why it should be related to financial reward." That is a concession that will make small appeal to doctors who, in their desire to be paid extra for undertaking extra work, are uncommonly like other people. |Well-to-do persons sensibly select a doctor in whom they have confidence to advise them in respect of any member of their family. A relation of mutual trust and responsibility grows up. A sense of responsibility in the doctor is promoted both by financial considerations and ~~by personal pride.~~ Trust and confidence nearly always breed a desire to justify them.

The alternative means of attracting to the poorer districts a reasonable proportion of the more able and ambitious doctors who previously tended to congregate with unnecessary density in the more residentially attractive quarters would be by the organisation of a well-paid, salaried medical service, the doctors for every district being publicly appointed and paid out of public funds. Abstractly, the advantages of such a service would be considerable. From the point of view of public administration it would be simplicity itself. Each doctor would be responsible for a given district and for those who happened to reside within it. Overlapping would be avoided and salaries would be as final and definite as in the army. If all doctors were able, conscientious and industrious, loving their work and caring for their patients year in and year out, regardless of the effects on their financial position, a salaried State medical service would be as near the ideal as any system we could devise. But, as I said in the *Nation* twenty years ago, doctors of experience and the working people themselves know only too well how fancy a picture this is. They know quite well that doctors are not equally skilful or equally attentive to their duties, and that much of the work of a general practitioner is sheer drudgery such as few men would continue to perform unless their living depended on it. Equally they know that the only person who is in a position to judge the day-by-day work of a doctor is his patient. And it is only so long as the individual patients can directly determine by their personal act of choice whether a doctor shall succeed or fail, in a worldly sense, that a high standard of personal service can generally be counted on. It is all very well for the specialist, or the man engaged in research, or the expert surgeon to be comparatively immune from servility to financial baits. Their work is interesting and dignified, and the admiring eyes of their profession are on them.

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* Health for All. By Dr. Stark Murray. Gollancz. 6*s.*

From the point of view of technical efficiency, moreover, the panel system seems to have been quite effective, in spite of all the obstacles and limitations implicit in the National Health Insurance Act that is operative to-day. Even Dr. Murray has to admit that " as to the fear that the N.H.I. would produce a lowering in the standard of medical service, everyone is agreed that this has not been the case. There are still many critics of the panel system, and undoubtedly many grounds for real complaint as to its deficiencies; but on the whole the panel system has led to an improvement in the medical service available to a large section of the community."

Dr. Murray's objection to any variation of pay between different practitioners, some doing perhaps six times the work of others, does not seem to be based on any general theory of communist or of socialist financial equalitarianism; for, he says, " it is unlikely that any Government would try to pay doctors less than £700 a year "—a sum which obviously could not possibly be paid to all the working members of the State. Recent correspondence in the medical journals gives some idea of the attitude prevailing among doctors themselves. Here is an extract from the letter of a doctor in the R.A.M.C., serving abroad: " No financial security, no regular hours, nothing is worth the sacrifice of soul which would be entailed. We should all have to be ' yes-men ' to administrators, lay people, senior officers in the State service; and the most affirmative ' yes-men ' would get the jobs." And here is a long passage from a letter which sensibly sums up the case for " free choice of doctor," and indirectly the case for the preservation of the maximum of individual liberty, even in a society in which finance has been effectively socialised.

> The patient wants a doctor in whose personal skill he has faith and who will not only treat him to the best of his ability, but will be a sort of medical tutor or mentor who will give him unbiased advice, based on a first-hand knowledge of the patient himself and of his environment, on health matters and on all sorts of things that have only a remote bearing on health. Particularly in poorer districts, he wants to feel that he has access to someone who will interpret and, if necessary, censor, the advice given by clinics, hospitals and consultants or through propagandist channels. I think he also wants to be the doctor's employer, to have the right to criticise him and to give effect to that criticism by transferring his custom elsewhere. Nobody ever takes up general practice either to have an easy life or to make a fortune. All the doctor wants is a competence that will include provision for his old age or will be sufficient for him to make that provision for himself. He, quite rightly, wants his remuneration to bear a definite relation to his industry, skill and experience.

The fact that a certain number of insured persons show little intelligence in their selection of doctors affords no more reason for the abolition of " free choice " than is afforded for working-class disfranchisement by the fact that some working-class votes are given unintelligently—a doctrine dangerously near to the Nazi contention.

HARRY ROBERTS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to C. B. Tucker.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Finding himself in a third-class railway carriage after he had bought a first-class ticket, Charles Joseph Silvertop, a farmer, of Burford, Oxford, pulled the communication cord and stopped the train. He complained of the inefficiency of the railway staff in directing him to the third-class compartment.—*Daily Mirror*.

My wife is of opinion that Hitler is a prisoner in Stalin's hands. She has had some half-dozen hunches before about Russia which have all proved true. So we are putting this one on record.—Letter in *Sunday Express*.

. . . the other nations may tend to forget what they owe to English, the language of the free, and may even adopt something like Esperanto, which would give to all English-speaking people no more than equality with Czechs, Frenchmen and Chinese.—Letter in *Headway*.

The Eton College Chronicle declares that the volume cannot fail to be a justification as well as an inspiration " to those of us who venture to believe that just as there will always be an England, so—despite the plots of new-world planners and the animus of County Councils—there will always be an Eton."—*Daily Telegraph*.

MORE RITZKRIEG

SINCE 1940, when blitz-brotherhood and invasion danger made the whole country kin, the Ritzkrieg campaign, containing the Private War plans of the Blimps, has gone to earth. For once an underground movement in Britain has been of the Right and not the Left. But now the Old Guards are beginning to come into the open again. Victory is in the air, and they are here to put the Tory into Victory.

A glance at the Ritzkrieg record since the winter of 1940 reveals much that is apparently trivial and superficial. Early attempts to supplement rations by free lunches with the Free Forces died away at the bidding of the implacable Lord Woolfskin, who had turned out to be quite the Wrong Kind of Man. The loss of Malaya introduced a new element of farce into tin and rubber company reports. During each lull fresh efforts were made to recruit harmless aristocrats to represent the backers of Little Kingdoms, and the Old Guard in Britain began to perceive that the Rear Guard in the U.S.A. were playing the same game of Hapsburg lip-service. The possible *geopolitik* of an American Ritzkrieg is to-day the most difficult problem Colonel Bogus and his followers have to face. It is worse than the great Red Dawn.

As if to add to their troubles, the famous Average Report has at last come out. They are circling round it, wondering where to attack. Their dilemma is that the Report does not, as far as ordinary people are concerned, go too far one way or the other. It is not Bolshevism run mad. Nor is it Capitalism run well. The Ritzkrieg supporters hoped that this blow for the Common Man would be just another dull thud. In the old days, Stationery Office publications remained stationary. Now, alas, they are on the march. The Average Report is forcing the Ritzkrieg to reveal its plans in advance, which is a disadvantage when you have no plans, and a hand which contains only a few Court cards and one or two Clubs, apart from those up your sleeve. The only successful suppression to date is the War Office's lightning blitzgrigg against the Army's ABCA.

AVERAGE REPORT

* * *

" We must plan." For months the dreaded word has gone round. In the Clubs it has been whispered: " Other people have a Plan. We must have a Plan. We must put something on paper——now."

It remains to be seen whether the various Red-white-and-blue prints now appearing are meant seriously. There are certain of the Old Guard who would frankly like to see a world fit for Neros to fiddle in, but their very naivete is shocking to those whose plans go deeper.

The pamphlet *Pacem et Circenses*, issued by the Lethe Press, does not emanate from the Ritzkrieg Brains Trust (or Brains Rust, as a misprint once maliciously described it). The Brains realise that promises do not pay, and that a régime of Beer and Cruising will not now satisfy the average chafing Briton. A better line which has been tried is the Stern Truth approach. It is in some measure a chip off the old Latin Bloc, now popular in Vichy, and chides the average man for his lack of faith, lack of exercise, etc. It is summed up in the masterly phrase: MORE P.T.—LESS E.P.T. There is, however, no suggestion that either prayers or physical jerks should be on the agenda at Board Meetings or Shareholders' Swag Parties.

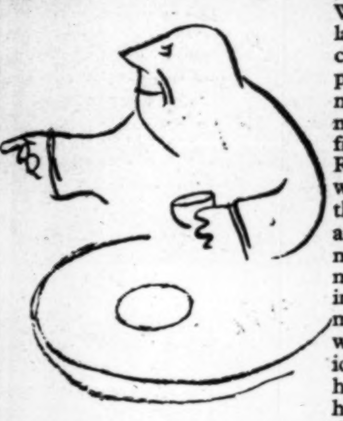
Post-war plans for industry are not so difficult to handle. The Ritzkrieg is fortunate in having at least the approval of the 120 Leading Industrialists, or 120 Families, as an unrepentent student of French politics might call them. In the manifesto issued by these Big Shots, whose collective headed-notepaper must be an awe-inspiring sight, much is benevolently granted to the workers, who may have their Works Councils, Production Committees, Shop Stewards who read the *Worker*, Canteens——all this and Bevin too they are allowed. Thus the Ritzkrieg motto *What You Have We Hold* has been skilfully turned to suit the time, and has become *Our Rights Are Your Privileges*. There is a nice distinction made between *de facto* and *de jure* recognition for the workers. The one fear of the 120 Families is that perhaps the Tirade Unions are going to be dissatisfied. The average T.U.C. leader they do not worry about. If he jibs they can always raise his status by inviting him to a shoot or giving him an issue of Directors' cigars. But the Tirade Unions, nurtured on Marx and the Webbs and the Commune, are different. They cannot be bought with the offer of being made gentlemen. They are a problem. The Big Shots have been having such a nice quiet game of Monopoly: a pity to let some Amalgamated Troublemakers' Union spoil it all. Even more trouble may, of course, come from the Small Tiraders, who weren't invited to the game of Monopoly, but whose position has constantly and most annoyingly to be " safeguarded," as if they were Young Girls in a big city. The sporting instinct of British M.P.s is unfortunately often roused on the side of the Little Fellow.

OUR RIGHTS ARE YOUR PRIVILEGES

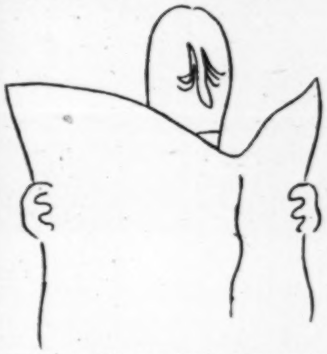
* * *

Diners and winers have been experiencing anxious times over the last two years. Once they used to take lunch as a matter of courses. Suddenly they dwindled to three, with an extra crustaceous temptation *pour encourager les huitres*. Lor

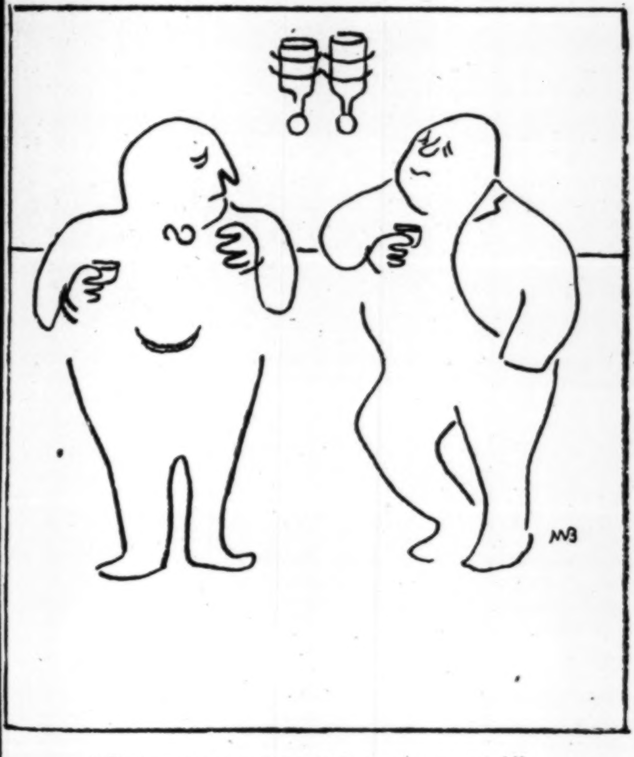
Woolfskin hit them in their most tender spot, for the Ritzkrieg, like any good army, marches on its stomach. When the dollar-a-nob order came in, the panic was not merely gastronomic. What frightened the Ritzkrieg most was the thought that an ordinary working man, perhaps a mechanic earning £10 a week, might simply walk into Claridges with his half-crowns in his hand and demand dinner (meaning, of course, lunch). But for some reason this did not happen. The *clientèle* remains select, and that makes up for all those braised delicacies from Uncle Spam. There are ways and means of keeping outsiders outside. Take your half-crowns along to a little restaurant like the *Foire Noire* and see for yourself.



However, the Ritzkrieg is not content with preserving its right to eat *saucisses de porc ravissantes* in the correctly coruscated surroundings. It is determined that the practice indulged in by the masses of eating in British restaurants and canteens shall be stopped once Freedom is won. Originally these Community Feeding Centres (an obvious Ritzkrieg title) were meant for the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady alike, and this was all right when the Blitzes forced them to be sisters under the bombs. But since it is quite likely that the Colonel himself is interested in the catering trade, the practice is now discouraged. Indeed, it is more likely than ever to-day now that the Conservative caterers want to try and make Bevin eat his words.



30 Years Behind " The Times "



" Bevin will never cater for me, sir ! "

The Ritzkrieg type of Old Guard doesn't want you to go where he lunches, nor does he want to go where you lunch ; he merely wants to run both places. Then everyone is happy, except possibly you.

One can still observe what has been called the Fight for Threedom after lunch in London. The magic portal swings open ; there gathers on the pavement, jocularly vying with each other for taxis, a group of hard-faced men who not only look as if they had done well out of the war but as if they were going to do even better out of the peace. For them, the last thimblefuls of cognac, the penultimate coronas, the Bristol Milk of paradise, are reserved. They crackle their midday editions, and if perhaps the Red Army has been forced back a mile or so, their lunches don't settle quite so comfortably. Then with more fruitless hailing of cabs, they wander towards their offices, secure, deferred, patriotic, and off fireguard duty at week-ends and holidays. There may be a few letters to sign, perhaps a publicity campaign to OK which urges ordinary men and women not to spend anything on themselves, or perhaps a merger to merge. Whatever it is, they do not flinch, when Tory Revivalism is there to rally them.

Michael Barsley

BABYLON

The wind was bright when we left the trading isles,
The sun was keen as a western gale ; our keel
Cut like a saw the rolling logs of the sea.
Porpoise bounced in the waves' blue shavings,
And gulls followed our decks as they follow a plough.
We were stuffed with cargo below, tight as a drum ;
Bales of cotton and linen and spiderweb silk,
And wool in the fleece, soaking with oil and water,
And grain, the finest of a fortunate harvest,
And butter down in the ice-box, packed into barrels,
And the island fruits, pomegranates, melons, bananas,
And coconuts, tapioca, spice.
When we swung into the straits a landward fog rose up
And rubbed out the stars. We hung off-shore awhile,
Missing the navigation lights, while unseen
Mountains boomed and thundered, and stars shot through the fog,
And the water was alive with fiery fishes—
Such sights we were accustomed to in tropic seas
But not in the estuary. We waited for dawn
And the mist to rise. Dawn came and the mist was there,
And the sun sprang out of the sea, and we saw the mist was smoke
Spiring its tall black cenotaph to the sky ;
And we stood on our decks saying : Alas, alas,
That great city Babylon, that mighty city,
For in one hour is thy judgment come.

Norman Nicholson

THE MERRY WIDOW

The revival of Franz Lehar's famous comic opera at His Majesty's is a success, and in wartime conditions that means that it promises to be a huge success. London is now filled with a vast shifting population, and that reservoir from which audiences are drawn is constantly being refilled. It is no longer necessary that the same people should want to go three, four, or five times to a play or show to secure for it a prodigious London run, though I can easily believe that there are many who may want to revisit this one. The music is delicious ; there is more genuine comedy in the situations of *The Merry Widow* than in the ordinary musical comedy, which is made out of bosh, and the spectacle on the stage is garishly exhilarating. Enchanting, easy music, sentimental passion with just enough relation to something real to save it from vapidity, plenty of nonsensical fun (there is danger of this ingredient being over-done), plenty of sex appeal, and a lavish glittering display—what more can livers-in-the-moment ask of an evening's entertainment ? It was a lucky idea to revive this Edwardian musical comedy.

I looked up what the critic of The *Times* said when *The Merry Widow* was first performed in London in June 1907. He reported that between acts two and three the audience caught up and whistled incessantly the famous waltz-tune. He spoke of " the strange and almost entirely beautiful dance executed to it by Miss Lily Elsie and Mr. Coyne." He remarked that the music was " never blatant or cheap," and that waltz-time was the composer's favourite rhythm which he managed " with constant variety and charm." He added, after praising Mr. George Graves in the part of the Marsovian Ambassador to Paris, that he had not *yet* overloaded it with buffoonery. What the critic deplored in anticipation did happen, I remember, later on. And I was reminded of that again by this revival. It was delightful to see Mr. George Graves in his original part of Popoff after so many years, and some of his up-to-date gag is excellent. But hard as it must be for a past-master of the comic turn to constrain his meandering waggery, I sensed from his audience the other night that it might be prudent to curtail his stories about a Scottish bus conductor who saved ticket-clippings to sell as confetti and a hen that laid a door-knob.

The pleasure of remembering the past entered into my enjoyment of the present while sitting in my stall at His Majesty's ; and so it will into the enjoyment of all who remember the wistfully graceful allurements of lovely Lily Elsie—if they are males, or the suave but dashing Joseph Coyne—if they are women. But the point to stress is that *The Merry Widow* is a cut above the most successful of past musical comedies, and does not require such overtones of memory in the spectator to make it still enjoyable to-day. It has, wonder of wonders, even a thread of story. The droll conflict of love and pride in the two principal figures, Sonia and Prince Danilo, is a real comedy-motive. So, too, is the situation created by the Baron Popoff in commanding his " dutiful " wife to encourage the advances of her lover, supposing that young man to be in pursuit not of her but of the millions of " the merry widow," which it is his diplomatic duty to secure for his Prince. The old ambassador's delighted exclamations, " Watch her ! " " How enticing she can be ! " and then his subsequent chagrin on discovering she has been behaving *con amore*, may be old stock-comedy but it is none the worse for that. We highbrows are right : there is no animation without merit, no " go " in mere bosh. Even uncritical, wartime London had no welcome for a revival of *The Belle of New York* the other day ; a musical comedy once almost as popular as *The Merry Widow.* Youth with its gardenia button-hole used to flock night after night to see the demure pretty face of Edna May under its Salvation Army bonnet, and hear her mild little pipe singing plaintively " But they only follow me." And follow her they did. I remember an acquaintance of mine used to engage half a dozen stalls every night in that pursuit. One night I filled one of them. But not the recollection of his rapt moon-like countenance during the performance or of the excitement (I was about nineteen) of driving to her rooms afterwards, where the stricken man presently arrived with four elephants' feet mounted in silver (he had lately returned from an African journey), could now enable me to sit through *The Belle of New York*. As I said, *The Merry Widow* does not require ancillary associations to be enjoyed, though your pleasure may be the greater for them. In old days those who had seen the Viennese performance used to complain that in London Danilo had become an entirely dancing part and had ceased to be a singing one. This is true of it to-day in the hands—or shall we say in the feet?—of Mr. Cyril Ritchard, who capers and prances, whirls and glides with admirable address. He also acts his moments of abruptly arrested tenderness or furious pique with entertaining vigour. Miss Lily Elsie was hardly a merry widow in the sense of being a "*lüstige Wittwe*"; on the contrary, she was appealing, and her appeal was even a little strange and remote. And, to-day, neither is Miss Madge Elliott "merry"; indeed, when angry she is almost reginal. She deserves rather, Catullus's compliment to a beauty, *candida, longa, recta*; she is fair, tall and straight. There is no gay malice in her glances or in her own awareness. She is not a tease. She relies largely for her effects on the rhythmic palpitation of her huge fan and her swaying steps. Her voice is very clear and pleasant. The moment she began the Marsovian song in the first act, I knew I should like her voice. The famous chorus song, "Women, Women," expressive of masculine resentment all the world over, comes across as well as ever. Frou-frou's "I'm just a simple girl" has been put into Act II from Franz Lehar's *Gigolette*, and syncopated. Miss Carol Raye, the naughty Frou-frou, danced and sang it gracefully, and its modernity was enthusiastically received; but to an old sentimentalist this music jarred with a period piece. The women's costumes were not strictly of the period either, but I'm not complaining of that. Perhaps cartwheel hats would have seemed too absurd. The scenery was not beautiful; but again that did not matter. One does not go to musical comedy for an aesthetic treat but in search of a more primitive kind of exhilaration, and glare and glitter serve that end! I was glad that I had not misremembered "the can-can"; it is an immodest dance. On the stage of His Majesty's it was perhaps performed more acrobatically than riggishly. I am ashamed to say I cannot remember if Danilo sang, hummed or recited "I go off to Maxim's"—anyhow, the song made no impression on me. That particular one was inserted by request, I have been told, and doubtless was well paid for. *The Merry Widow* made the fortune of Maxim's in Paris. Its subsequent history has been curious. For many years it was a focus of expensive gay life in the policeman's sense of gaiety, a place where no respectable woman could be seen. Afterwards it became more *mondain* than *demi-mondain*, and at the present time it is the haunt of corrupt German officials and officers. There the large sums of money pass from hand to hand which can purchase visas or preferential treatment. The music of *The Merry Widow* to-day is popular in Germany, judging from the frequency with which the radio plays it and other Viennese operettas. The light singing heart of Vienna was one of the first things the Nazis stamped to death.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.
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PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Othello" at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge

In the Marlowe Society's performance of *Othello* Cambridge amateurs once again offered a lesson to London producers. For this was the first occasion upon which we have seen the characters of Iago and the Moor so exhibited as to make sense of the story. Desdemona's love for Othello needs to seem unnatural and explicable only by witchcraft. Yet we are usually shown a handsome sheikh, who might turn any girl's head. At Cambridge Othello was a proper blackamoor, sooty-skinned and woolly-pated, so that Desdemona's love shone as a victory of mind over matter. Still more important, every expression of his voice expressed a fervent simplicity, and for all his dignity he was visibly as easy to deceive as a small child—a noble savage pathetically defenceless against Italian wiles. The tragedy, as a note in the programme pointed out, results from the contrast between what is and what seems. And just as Othello looks base and is noble, Iago must not only be a knave but look trustworthy. All the previous Iagos we have seen have been transparently villainous. One possibility is to make him handsome and high-spirited, a *faux bonhomme*; another is that adopted at Cambridge, to make him a puritan, an anticipation of Tartuffe. (The actor looked rather like portraits of Cromwell.) The effect of an Othello and an Iago thus conceived was extraordinary; whereas usually the tragedy strains our credulity, and appears to depend on a series of accidents, it now seemed inevitable—and in consequence it became almost too painful to be borne. The performance of these two parts was as brilliant as the conception; not only was the verse beautifully and intelligently spoken, but the gestures and movements were exactly expressive, and both actors showed deep reserves of power. The female parts at Cambridge are no longer played by striplings—which is a pity, because often such impersonation has thrown light on the characters, since they were intended by Shakespeare for boy-actors. But the Emilia on this occasion was most accomplished, and the Desdemona was delicate and touching. Roderigo and Brabantio were very well characterised, and the supporting cast proved that they had been well rehearsed. The setting was pleasing, and the costumes handsome—the play was given in the costumes of 1690, suggesting a performance such as Pepys might have attended. We wish this *Othello* could be seen in London, and then we might in future be spared the misreading of the two chief parts that has now become traditional.

"Brighton Rock" at the Garrick

Mr. Graham Greene's admirable novel has been made by Mr. Harvey into a tense and impressive play. Anyone who has been at a prep. school recognises his old enemies when he goes to a gangster film: Snake Pirelli parades in Chicago the same boasting and bullying and mean beastliness as Robinson Minor at St. Swithin's. The English racecourse gangs, though feebler than their American counterparts, are made of similar material; and Pinkie, in this story, suffers from arrested development—is, in fact, a nasty little Peter Pan. Mr. Greene, with deep insight, placed opposite him as his enemy and conqueror, a jovial tart, Ida, the symbol of adult entirety. But in the novel there is a further contrast: Pinkie, the murderer, is a Catholic who believes in hell; Ida, who tracks him down, because she believes in "what's right," is unregenerate, a specimen of the "natural man," coarsely amiable, bestially kind, who is the most dangerous enemy to religion. This crucial point is lost in the play. Mr. Greene is a Catholic, and his novel betrays a misanthropic, almost Jansenist, contempt for the virtues that do not spring from grace; but in the play the pagan virtues appear frankly attractive, while the Catholic beliefs of the villain seem merely a further twist of abnormality. Despite its razor-slashings and murders, *Brighton Rock* is not a thriller—indeed it is so dangerously superior to most plays that it may fall short of the success it deserves. It is sinister as well as exciting, perhaps too sinister for these times. Everyone interested in the drama is therefore recommended to see it as soon as possible. The acting is remarkable; Mr. Richard Attenborough, in the part of Pinkie, deserves to have won fame in a single night, for his study in abnormal psychology is thoughtful, delicate and powerful. Miss Hermione Baddeley plays Ida comically, touchingly, fruitily, and with complete accomplishment. Miss Dulcie Gray brings a convincing simplicity to the part of Pinkie's victim, and the other parts are well maintained. The producer, Mr. Richard Bird, has failed to bring off Pinkie's death—the scene is quite unplausible; also the characters who cross the stage like a chorus with scraps of conversation are clumsily handled. Otherwise the production is good, and the sets are excellent. This is a play not to be missed.

"What Every Woman Knows," at the Lyric

This once so successful play has become wearisome, despite a good story and many telling lines, because every point is hammered home, as if the brilliant author were writing down to an audience of small children. The first act is masterly: but afterwards every *t* is crossed again and again, every *i* covered with a confetti of dots, and the author uses the clumsiest devices to make quite sure that we have understood. The London theatre-goer, it seems, must have become enormously more sophisticated in the last thirty-five years—probably the movies have trained him to be quicker in the uptake. At the Lyric Miss Barbara Mullen makes Maggie as stiff as a brown tea-pot—a performance that will not satisfy old admirers of Miss Hilda Trevelyan, but it is highly effective. In the great outburst in the third act Mr. John Stuart fails to convey the necessary force—the part demands great acting: elsewhere he does well. Dame Irene Vanbrugh displays all, and more than all, her wonted vivacity, but this most delightfully English of actresses is not happily cast as a Frenchwoman. Of the supporting cast, Mr. James Woodburn is excellent, Miss Diana Gould graceful, and Mr. Hannen merely wasted. The play, however, has become unactable; performed in the modern style, it is unreal; performed in a more Edwardian way, it would also be grotesque.

THE MOVIES

"I Married a Witch," at the London Pavilion
"Immortal Sergeant," at the Odeon.

There is plenty of fun in the new Clair film. The witch is a real witch (Veronica Lake), burnt in Puritan days, and coming back to plague the descendant (Frederic March) of her persecutors. Spirals of smoke whisk into whisky bottles and lurk there talking; doors slam, fires break out, a car soars into the air before the astonished gaze of the speed-cop; a wedding is disintegrated by a cyclone and an election defeat transformed by witchery into a triumph, with not a single vote going to the loser; the witch drinks her own love potion, falls in love and—a happy ending being in tune—settles down to family life, after proving that love is stronger than witchcraft. Does it all sound a little mechanical? Perhaps, and so it is, by the old Clair, or the new Preston Sturges, standard. But though *I Married a Witch* may not be inspired, it is amusing and has nice touches. The atmosphere of spooks and sex is kept going, and there are several sequences to remind us that before Clair read stories by Thorne Smith he directed *Le Million*. Veronica Lake makes a charming witch, Frederic March sustains a worried honesty in difficult circumstances, Robert Benchley is helpfully unhelpful, and Cecil Kellaway as a disreputable *revenant* provides the funniest moments of the film.

Immortal Sergeant, yet another film of the Libyan desert, might have been made to ram home the excellencies of our own *Nine Men*. Same sandhills, same lost patrol, same marauding enemy planes and eventual rescue, but the American film puts in all the glamour and "drama" Harry Watt left out. The result—with *Desert Victory*, too, fresh in our minds—is unreal though not unexciting melodrama. "It's the stillness gets you!" says Sergeant Kelly (Thomas Mitchell); he has to listen through howls of music as he speaks. Sometimes the howls change to arpeggios on the harp; and then we know that the hesitating corporal (Henry Fonda) will be thinking back to the girl and the Chelsea parties he left behind him. *Immortal Sergeant* is passionately in earnest (its moral seems to be that to get your girl you must get tough first in Libya), and in peacetime no doubt we should accept it as a successful if conventional picture of war.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

C.P. AFFILIATION

Sir,—You very rightly point to the difficulties of affiliating the Communist Party of Great Britain to the Labour Party so long as the C.P. is bound by its constitution to carry out the decisions of the Komintern. The same point has been made by the National Executive of the Labour Party. It is irrefutable.

But, as you go on to point out, this does not mean that the problem of working-class unity can simply be left unsolved. It was the split in the workers' parties that let Fascism through to victory before this war. If the split is suffered to persist after the war, reaction will triumph again and we shall lose the peace.

The sound conclusion is that the problem must be tackled on the international plane. The first step is to send a delegation of the National Executive to Moscow to discuss with the Soviet Communist Party for what common purposes we could co-operate and on what lines we could organise a single all-in Internationale, based on one party in each country, in order to bring about unity between the workers everywhere.

A composite resolution calling for the despatch of a delegation to the U.S.S.R. was submitted at the last Annual Conference of the Labour Party. It was withdrawn after the following statement by Mr. H. J. Laski on behalf of the National Executive :—

> Your Executive takes the view that at the earliest possible moment, and on your behalf, it should ask the authorities in the Soviet Union to receive a delegation from the British Labour Party for the purpose of discussing all outstanding problems between them and ourselves, and of finding, if we can find, a common basis that will enable their purposes and our purposes to march jointly together in an unbreakable union for all time. That will be done at the earliest possible moment that appears suitable.

The resolution was accordingly withdrawn and the pledge stands. But no decision has yet been taken by the Executive to act on their pledge, although eight months have elapsed since the Executive declared that the sending of a delegation to the U.S.S.R. was desirable, important and urgent.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that the C.P. demand for affiliation, in spite of the obvious objections and its emphatic rejection by the Executive, is gathering a formidable volume of support, and that at least one local Labour Party has already sent a draft resolution for the conference, demanding

> That this pledge given to the last Annual Conference should be at once carried out, and that the negotiations should include the question of founding a new all-inclusive workers' International at the end of the war with only one party in each country ; and that, pending the outcome of these negotiations, and in order to create a favourable atmosphere, the National Executive Committee should work out some form of practical co-operation for wartime purposes between the Labour Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain.

It is to be sincerely hoped that the Executive will have honoured its pledge by Whitsun. If not, the above resolution should provide both those who are for and those who are against the immediate affiliation of the C.P., regardless of how the voting goes on that issue, with a constructive policy for promoting the maximum national and international unity in the working class of this country and of Europe.

A Labour Candidate

PRISON MEDICAL SERVICE

Sir,—The paragraph in your issue of March 13th reminds me of a conversation I had with a young conscientious objector in the last war. He had a very alert and objective outlook, and had been a prisoner in both civil and military prisons. "The only officials for whom I cannot say a good word," he reported, "are the doctors. It is simply impossible to find anything good to say of them."

One always hopes for more understanding of "all prisoners and captives," and, as you remark, there have been changes of the greatest importance, but the official view too often avoids reality.

177 Baldock Road, Harold Picton
Letchworth, Herts.

EDUCATION IN H.M.F.

Sir,—So much has been said in criticism of the Army Council that it is only fair to give the experience of one civilian, which indicates how much freedom of discussion is possible to-day. As Vice-Chairman of Liverpool Regional Committee for Education in H.M.F. I have been closely associated with Brains Trusts, and I have personally taken part in about fifty with the Army, Navy and R.A.F. We invite "any questions on any topic" and say that supplementary questions may be asked. There is no sign of censorship, and in fact questions are usually asked orally from the body of the meeting.

We have dealt with all kinds of controversial topics, including politics, economics and religion. Not a single complaint has been received on any of these occasions.

This is a remarkable testimony to the open-minded attitude of the Army, Navy and Air Force officers, and the number of meetings (fifty) is sufficient to represent a fair sample of conditions in the N.W. region surrounding Liverpool.

H. E. Potts

ANTI-SEMITISM

From Rabbi L. Gerhard Graf, Minister of the Bradford Reform Synagogue.

It was with much disquietude that I read the letter of Mrs. Fordham. As German-Jewish refugee and rabbi I feel I should add a few remarks on the problem which has been brought under discussion in your journal. My message goes out to Jews and non-Jews alike. The present war, we have been told, and we believe in it, is raging in order to remove intolerance, hatred and prejudice and all their disastrous consequences, and to put in their places an entirely different attitude to our fellow beings. We believe that this transformation which is to result in a happier world has to begin now ! It is not achievable by State-laws only, although they reflect always the views and standards of governments. It can be achieved by the good will of the individual, by the most earnest resolutions on the part of every soul to promote peace and harmony on God's earth. With this foreword in mind and heart I wish to define my opinion regarding anti-Semitism. I do not know whether Mrs. Fordham really means only those Jews who have come here from the Continent in recent years as "refugees from hatred, prejudice and persecution," or if she does not mean perhaps the Jew in general ! Every decent Jew, whether he be of foreign or of British nationality, will strongly condemn the behaviour of single uneducated people of his brethren in faith who are a nuisance to society. But I cannot understand that it seems to be "small wonder that anti-Semitism is growing," and the "repercussions are enormous." It is most deplorable, nay, alarming, that as to Jews people are always inclined to generalise their statements. Otherwise they would just feel annoyed about a few unpleasant individuals, as I myself also do sometimes with regard to non-Jews or Jews. It is a definite moral deficiency if one unsocial person is able to cause "bitterness" in the heart of a second one to such an extent that the position of the refugees or the Jews becomes endangered ! Unhappily it has been our fate as Israel since the days of old to be judged not by our valuable men and women who either lived their lives in quietude decently and modestly or who contributed to the cause of human civilisation, but by those outsiders who only and solely have been regarded as "Jewish" in their conduct, and who in reality are most "un-Jewish" with regard to their behaviour, "un-Jewish" as to the teachings of our holy religion. You ask, what can be done ? I have to refer back to the opening words of this letter of mine. Mankind as a *whole* must be re-educated in the very sense of the term. All of us have to learn much better how to live with our fellow men. Let us do away with prejudice, with generalisations, with inconsiderate and undisciplined behaviour

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and let us try to recognise the "beam in our own eyes," everyone to strive for higher ethical standards of life, a task set before all, Christians *and* Jews—and for some Jews and some Christians an alarming necessity !

Sir,—May I, through the courtesy of your columns, make a short answer to a heavy postbag ?

The main theme of the critics of my letter seems to be that other persons, or groups of persons, behave as badly as a small percentage of the Jews. I do not for a moment dispute this. The object of my letter, however, was to face squarely the possible danger to the Jewish people of anti-Semitism and to examine one of its causes. Your correspondents lack realism if they will not face this. The fact that "Aryans" of various nationalities also behave badly is, of course, irrelevant, since their countries are not likely to be held responsible, in the same way as is the Jewish race, for the misdoings of their nationals. This is unfair, but it is obviously true. I did not use the word "refugee"; the worst offenders are not necessarily to be found in their ranks.

I have received letters, visits and offers of help, many couched in the most moving terms, from Jews of varying nationalities, who share my views. I sincerely hope that for the sake of a great community the real problem of the bad Jew will be faced.

Eugenie Fordham

COUNTRY SCHOOLS

Sir,—Mr. Worsley in his review of "Young Citizen," by A. E. Morgan, wisely points out that the day versus boarding school controversy is misconceived —what is necessary is that all children who normally attend day schools should spend at least one year at school in the country. He goes on to suggest, however, that "in the transition period the huts and camps and barracks left over from the war would make suitable sites" for such schools. This sounds a rather cheerless prospect both for teachers and children, and there is surely no need to make do, even for a time, with the temporary refuse of the war. All over England there are thousands of mansions, country houses, and outsize rectories which could be turned into excellent schools or which could at least form a nucleus to which temporary buildings could be added.

One of the surprises of the war is the relative ease with which buildings of all shapes and sizes have been adapted for other purposes. Houses have been turned almost overnight into hospitals, ministries, schools, fire stations, military headquarters or maternity homes. Sometimes, through haste and lack of materials and labour, the results have not been 100 per cent. successful, but the experience gained is enough to show that with thorough reconditioning and with the installation of an adequate heating system, country houses can become thoroughly effective schools.

It is hardly necessary to labour the educational advantages to a boy or girl from Bermondsey or Burslem of a year in a country house. Most of our mansions with their noble parks and magnificent gardens are of superlative beauty. The children (who would presumably be between 14 and 16) could help to keep the gardens in good condition and the boys could learn carpentry, plumbing and building work by helping to maintain the fabric and to construct additional outbuildings.

Sir Richard Livingstone and Lord Zetland have already proposed that country houses and Government hostels should be taken over for adult education. This is admirable, but children in their impressionable years have a particular need for beautiful and healthy surroundings. There are, in fact, enough houses for both purposes, and many will become available as soon as the war is over and the army and the evacuees melt away. Let us, therefore, make plans now to take over as schools and colleges for adults every large house as soon as it becomes available.

Duncan Smith

SUNDAY THEATRES

Sir,—Mr. Robert Young's account of Equity's early days is fictitious and will be as surprising to the managers as to me. Equity had no uncertain start, nor did it ever depend on the good will or otherwise of the managers, whose frowns (now happily dispelled) were far darker after 1931 than before. If Mr. Young really knew Equity's secret history he would be aware that it is largely due to Equity and Mr. Alfred Wall that even Sunday Opening of Cinemas is permitted only on condition that employees do not work more than six days a week. If a seven-day week for employees is inevitable in the theatre, why after ten years has it not arrived in the cinema ?

But what is this ? Apparently Mr. Young doesn't mind the actor working a seven-day week after all as long as he does it for six days' pay ! Can it be that Mr. Young is only thinking of the few West End "star" artists and has forgotten the hundreds of chorus girls (to say nothing of small part players) who already do twelve or more shows a week for £5 to £3 or even less, and to whom extra shows mean extra expenses. If this is Mr. Young's definition of "attempting to defend trade union rights too robustly" give us the commercial managers, who have at least undertaken not to attempt a seven-day working week.

Llewellyn Rees,
General Secretary, British Equity.

Sir,—Both parties to the controversy about the Sunday opening of theatres have managed to confuse the issue. Theatregoers want Sunday opening after the war as well as during it. They do not want, however, a seven-day week for actors, and in any case Equity is quite strong enough to prevent this.

The question is whether theatres shall close on Sundays or on Mondays. In the past the objection to Sunday theatres has come from Sabbatarians, who usually thought all play-going immoral. I cannot suppose that actors think their art less moral than that of the musician. Their objections therefore seem to be based less on conscience than on personal inconvenience. In the other occupations that provide entertainment and relaxation, Sunday work is the rule. If an actor's conscience prevents him using on Sundays the services of a taxi-driver, an engine-driver, a caddie, a waiter or a cook ; if he will neither listen to music on a Sunday, nor go to a movie, nor read a Sunday or a Monday newspaper, then his objection to working himself on Sundays becomes unanswerable. But if he is happy to let others work on Sunday for his benefit, should he not be equally happy to work himself for the benefit of his fellows ? It is a sacrifice of convenience, not of convictions, for which the public is hoping.

Journalist

JENNIE LEE AND THE I.L.P.

Sir,—Mr. Walter Padley accuses me of misleading your readers. He remarks triumphantly that Miss Jennie Lee's election address did not contain "a single reference to Socialism."

Jennie Lee repeatedly warned her audiences against the use of undefined words like "Socialism" and "Socialist," which often mean entirely different things to different people. For instance, Hitler still calls himself a National Socialist. Her election address it is true, did not contain the word "Socialism," but she defined her attitude in words, of which the following passage is a fair sample : "We must have a planned Britain. It must be competently planned. The present muddle of Government control and private ownership is wasteful and irritating. Monopolies and near-monopolies, our land, banks, mines, railways and power, are ripe for public ownership and control. Within that framework there is ample room for small private businesses." Your readers must judge for themselves whether I have "misled" them.

Personally, as a Socialist of over 20 years' standing, I have far more use for people who support the foregoing programme, even if they call themselves Liberals, than I have for so-called Socialists, whose naive talk enables our opponents to argue that Socialism implies the nationalisation of our wives and our toothbrushes, or for Socialists like the Bristol I.L.P., whose political activities guarantee the return of Tory candidates.

R. St. John Reade

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JONATHAN CAPE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Coming up through Devon the other day, the slopes of Dartmoor in view from the train, succeeded by the lovely spacious landscape from Brent to Ivybridge, then the reddened waves curling in to the foot of the red cliffs by Teignmouth, I derived a peculiar, pointed pleasure from reading that book of a Devonshire man, Froude's *The Nemesis of Faith*.

Of all the great Victorians Froude, it seems to me, is the writer least estimated at his proper worth and most worth while reviving. There is so much in him that should appeal to our age; in many ways he had more affinities with the twentieth century than with the nineteenth: the strain of scepticism in him for one thing, the historian's relativism that made him see all religions as myths and men's philosophies as rationalisations of their interests and desires; his independence of mind, detached from either party in politics, which saw the cardinal importance of good leadership to a people rather than the emptier clichés of demagogic appeal, so dangerous if believed in.

And what a magnificent writer; what a stylist! So infinitely better than Carlyle, to whom he deferred, like the rest of the Victorians, as a great man and a major prophet. And I am not so sure that in addition to writing better, he had not more to offer in what he said, at any rate more sense, than Carlyle had. Give me Froude every time: a better historian, a better writer, a more sceptical, a more subtle, intelligence.

Perhaps one should not wonder why such a man was so controversial a figure to the Victorians—so downright they were, so unsubtle, so censorious and convinced, so sensitive to any departure from orthodoxy, so crude. And yet it is a little difficult to understand quite why Froude was so much harassed and attacked. Every book of his provoked an outburst of criticism and controversy from the first to the last. His personality itself was regarded, I think very unjustly, as in some curious way questionable. It was a strange, and yet characteristic, fate which shrouded his greatest friendship and the chief intellectual influence in his later life, that of Carlyle, in a more resounding storm of controversy than any other.

Yet he was read. He held people's attention. He had admirers, if few defenders and no followers. He was a lonely figure, at the same time as he was much sought after, and a distinguished person in society. Yet one cannot doubt that all this criticism and controversy had a deep effect upon him, though he kept himself in restraint and hardly referred in his writings to the detraction which followed him all his days. Lytton Strachey has tried to put the vendetta with which Freeman pursued Froude in a comic light; it was anything but comic really, and shows up Strachey in a rather deplorable role, always ready to sacrifice truth to a joke, even a poor one. On Froude the ceaseless attacks had the effect of driving him in upon himself, making him aloof, and giving him a rather cynical and sardonic air in public—though with his intimates he was an open and brilliant talker on all subjects. It had the further, and regrettable, effect of forbidding any official biography, and most of his letters and papers were destroyed.

The result is that he is much less well known than many lesser men among the Victorians. Think if we had only had something comparable to Sir G. O. Trevelyan's classic *Life and Letters of Macaulay*. The materials for it were there all right: the background of that brilliant family of brothers, the masterful figure of Archdeacon Froude, the lovely countryside of the Dart where they were all brought up, the Oxford of the Oxford Movement with Froude's close contact with its leaders, the friendships with Matthew Arnold, Clough, Carlyle, the life in Wales and on the Devon coast with its open-air interests, angling, sea-fishing, sailing, the voyages he made all over the world, like his west country forbears, the Forgotten Worthies whom he caused to be remembered in a famous essay. Alas, I am afraid there will never be a *Life and Letters of Froude* worthy to stand by Trevelyan's Macaulay now. It is sad to think that there might have been.

But that's just like Froude's luck. I can't help thinking that he was an unlucky man to have had so much trouble. And his troubles began with his first books, and persisted to the last. *The Nemesis of Faith* is chiefly known for having been publicly burnt by the Sub-rector of his college at Oxford when Froude was a young Fellow. It is deserving of attention on more serious grounds and for its own sake. Its subject is the ferment of thought about the foundations of faith stirred up by the Oxford Movement, the dilemma of belief which was such a critical issue to sensitive minds in the mid-nineteenth century and especially to those brought up in a clerical environment like Froude, whose livelihood and career were involved in it.

We need not pay much attention to the story: it is the autobiography in it which counts. And though Froude was forced to disclaim that it was autobiographical, in the way in which authors sometimes are, in a preface to the second edition (1849), in fact there was no mistaking the parallel between his hero's case and his own. Markham Sutherland has the same struggle with his father, the same difficulties about the clerical career—which, like Froude, who stopped at deacon's orders, he drops—the same intellectual doubts about the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, the historic and exclusive claims of Christianity, the same horror at the wicked nonsense of the doctrine of eternal punishment. Religions were all myths; truth was not to be found in either of the rival armies that claim so loudly to be her champions. At the same time as he disbelieved in any of the particular revelations which made such exclusive—and mutually conflicting—claims to allegiance, "a profound belief in God and in God's providence lay at the very core of his soul." The stage is set for the historian of the Reformation in England, when God had shown himself to be distinctly on the Protestant side.

Incredible as it may seem, Froude was sometimes charged, on the basis of what he wrote about himself under the guise of Edward Fowler in his first story, "The Spirit's Trials," with moral cowardice. Any stick would do to beat a dog who had left the comfortable kennels of orthodoxy; "it's the banana that leaves the bunch that gets skinned," as the egregious Buchman said in his palmier days. It seems to me very brave, and not merely youthful or ingenuous, on Froude's part to have published the book. It lost him his Fellowship; it lost him (fortunately for him) a job in Tasmania; for a time he had to depend upon the generous-hearted hospitality of Kingsley. The old archdeacon, who had bought up and destroyed as many copies as he could of Froude's previous book, *The Shadows of the Clouds*, published anonymously (1847), cut off supplies at this second offence.

Both books are chiefly interesting from the autobiographical point of view. The story "The Spirit's Trials" in the first book contains a terrible indictment of the bullying rampant at Westminster when Froude was a boy there. There can be no doubt that he suffered deeply and that it left a mark on him. He certainly had to be taken away, and he fancied that it made a moral coward of him. Later, he tells us, he had to face the weaknesses that such treatment germinated in him, and he was able to conquer them—but not till years after. These two books of the eighteen-forties tell us, under a thin disguise, the story of his intellectual and moral struggle. Those years in which he wrote them were the formative years for him, when he worked out, after the immense disturbance that Newman made in his mental life and the agitation had subsided, the position from which he confronted and carried out his own life's work. I hope to deal with that later.

There is a great deal more to interest the reader in both books, especially in the *Nemesis of Faith*. I doubt if anywhere one gets a closer or more intimate sense of the source of Newman's hold over the young men of his generation at Oxford. Froude could never forget his fascination, and, far as he moved away from him in intellectual position, he always thought of him as one of the two men of genius of the age: Newman, Carlyle. Forty years later when himself a famous man, he wrote a study, "The Oxford Counter-Reformation," in which he speaks of Newman now a Cardinal, immensely old and celebrated, with the same inner feeling for him as when an undergraduate he heard that voice from the pulpit at St. Mary's. He had brought Newman in as the *deus ex machina* at the end of the *Nemesis*—an extraordinary instance of the fascination, almost a kind of wish-fulfilment, for the man from whom he had departed:

> How often in old college years he had hung upon those lips; that voice so keen, so preternaturally sweet, whose very whisper used to thrill through crowded churches, when every breath was held to hear; that calm, grey eye; those features, so stern, and yet so gentle.

He finds exactly the right phrase to describe the personality that arose from such sensitiveness under such self-discipline; he speaks of the "silvery loveliness of character" that resulted from it.

Then, too, we can trace in the moving descriptive passages of these little volumes the evocative cadences, the foreshadowings of famous pages he was to write at the height of his powers:

> The old black wood lies round the house as it lay then, but I have no fear now of its dark hollows, of the black glades under its trees. There are no fairies and no ghosts there any more; only the church bells and the church music have anything of the old tones, and they are silent, too, except at rare, mournful, gusty intervals.

Where did he get the secret of such silvery cadences? Where, indeed, but from Newman himself? The apologist of the Protestant Reformation was the Cardinal's greatest pupil.

A. L. Rowse

NEW NOVELS AND STORIES

Long Division. By Hester W. Chapman. *Secker and Warburg.* 8s. 6d.
The Dead Look On. By Gerald Kersh. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.
Letters from the Big House. By Jim Phelan. *The Cresset Press.* 7s. 6d.
The Last Inspection. By Alun Lewis. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

Unless he is also a writer even the critical reader of fiction pays little attention to the *technique* of the novel or the short story. Judgment is made not on methods, but on results and a work is praised or condemned for the interest it arouses, the truth of its statement and the quality of the writing. This is the normal consumer's attitude. Neither Spam Mornay nor the finest Crêpe de Volaille arouses much curiosity as to the method of preparation.

The first is rejected as unpalatable and the second is savoured and discussed purely in terms of achievement. Only in cases where the particular error committed by the cook—over-salting, burning, under-cooking—is flagrantly obvious, does the consumer make a harsh judgment on the preparation. In fact technique only becomes apparent where it fails. Even the elaborate explanations of Henry James do little to enhance our pleasure in his results. "I wished to show" is a statement which can repel as much as if the chef were to describe his exact methods and intentions before each course.

And yet an undictated examination of method and technique can often add to the reader's appreciation. In the case of Miss Chapman's book there will surely be little disagreement on her results. This is undoubtedly a brilliant and successful novel. But since its success depends to a very large degree on the method she has chosen for presenting her material, this method is well-worth examining.

Superficially *Long Division* will be placed in the honourable ranks of private-school novels—but this is hardly where it belongs. Here the school provides a background to a purely adult story—hardly more of a background than the Ritz Hotel or a cathedral town might have done had the adult events been situated there. This is far from saying that the background is either arbitrary or unimportant. A fully rounded novel is a concerto in which both orchestra and solo instruments are essential. But in this book the headmaster's wife is the narrator, and her husband preoccupies her more than do the boys.

The story itself is quickly summarised. Mr. and Mrs. Pirrington start a new school with a nucleus of eight boys. He is a born schoolmaster, but also a vulgar egotist, vain, weak and easily corruptible. Corruptors are at hand in the local seaside town, bar and club-house adulterors, good chaps and marvellous little women. Before many terms are out Mr. Pirrington has abandoned the school and eloped with one of his Seabeach mistresses. It is the story of a white woman's isolation in a jungle of wild beasts and friendly but erratic natives. Mrs. Pirrington combines zoology with anthropology, and maintains her scientific integrity until at last relieved by a semi-civilised millionaire. Now the use of the first person provides as many problems and as many solutions as any other method.

The White Peacock is a conspicuously successful example of one extreme: here the narrator is simply an onlooker whose role in the book is to explain and describe the principal characters. The opposite extreme is the flow of individual consciousness, the deliberate distortion of the individual view. Miss Chapman has chosen an intermediary position, and she has accepted all the consequences of her choice.

The reader is quickly convinced that Mrs. Pirrington is more intelligent, more thoughtful, and more perceptive than any of the natives or animals who surround her. In her scientific jungle studies we may expect a reasonable measure of objectivity, but we may *not* expect—for this is the deliberate limitation of the first person—to see through animal or native eyes or to feel as they do. Here is a sample of Mrs. Pirrington's zoological observation:

> In the Green Lion the Seabeach College schoolmasters could unbutton and sweat and hob-nob without self-consciousness; they could stare at women and comment on their proportions and make-up . . . they could shout and bully and backslap . . . they could speak at length in pompous and repetitive self-revelation . . .

It is obvious that Mrs. Pirrington doesn't like the wild beasts, but she restrains her dislike in the interests of zoology.

Her anthropology is quite as cool and detached:

> The boys . . . revolve in their own worlds, spin round the grown-ups and then away, impervious, cynical and faithless; this gives them that merciless, cool fresh look which some have found so moving . . . the limited, sterile colloquialism of their talk makes them as formal, as removed, as courtiers or tight-rope dancers; bring them down to earth and their standards are absurd, their taste worthless.

The limitations of the scientific "I" are obvious: the picture is two-dimensional. But how much better than the facile suppositions which are so frequently made about other people's thoughts and feelings. Too many novelists rush ignorantly in where an angel of discretion would fear to tread. Miss Chapman's more modest ambition has produced a novel of exceptional imagination and intelligence.

Mr. Kersh's methods must be judged by his unusual intentions. In a far grimmer jungle than Mrs. Pirrington's he has no time for scientific observations, and *The Dead Look On* is a rifle shot aimed at a tiger in the very act of destruction. The book is a sufficiently credible reconstruction of Lidice not to offend the average reader's good sense. Its intention is to inspire fury, pity and admiration and the method is one of heroic frontal assault. Such books are badly needed, for it has become a truism that the very scale and persistence of horror has largely blunted English senses. To live aware of our own times involves a continual battle against, not indifference but the failure of imagination. There has been so rich an outpouring of vibrant hypocrisy, so little effective action that cynicism has joined the battle against awareness. Mr. Kersh's book provides a crude but effective weapon for use in this battle. With great skill he gives brief sketches of some dozen "Dudicka" characters, of seven among the exterminating battalion. The horror starts on the first page and swells in a ghastly crescendo as we observe each victim preparing for death or deportation, and each exterminator preparing to kill. Some readers may find that the horror has outstripped their own powers of apprehension. And this, since Mr. Kersh has deliberate intentions on our emotion, must be judged a weakness. We *know*, of course, that these things have happened and that exaggeration would be virtually impossible. One is far from demanding "objectivity" in such a book, or a sprinkling of "good Germans" to exhibit broad-mindedness. One is far, too, from judging this emetic by gourmet standards. But horror on a smaller scale might have been a sharper weapon against our thickening skins. Yet *The Dead Look On* must be judged an effective book, and one which *should*, in the plain moral sense, be widely read.

Mr. Phelan starts with the immense technical advantage not only of knowing his subject but of having dealt with it in at least three earlier books. He moves with an ironic confidence in his appalling prison world, at times with a peculiar bitter nostalgia.

In any collection of short stories an initial problem of technique is to overcome the obvious lack of continuity, to impose some sort of unity on the whole. These *Letters from the Big House* have a powerful unity of background: their world is minute and ferociously interrelated. Indeed, the whole is more satisfying than each contributory story. Mr. Phelan has an old-fashioned predilection for *dénouement*, for a last sentence overloaded with surprise or sudden depreciation. He has become, in this book, less of a dispassionate narrator, more of a raconteur. In that genre these stories are excellent, and there is no doubt of Mr. Phelan's literary skill.

Had Mr. Alun Lewis spent as many years in the army as Mr. Phelan spent in prison, his stories might have achieved the same assurance and unity. But where Phelan moves almost too slickly among his "mugs" and "grasses," Lewis is less at ease with "Jerry Planes," "Civvy Street" and the "Boss Class." His reactions to army life are intensely interesting, for he is the 1943 equivalent of Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves. As a prose-writer he is inferior to both, but his reactions may be contrasted. Graves and Sassoon were civilised human beings, outraged by the stupidity and horror of trench warfare. Their reactions were more or less clear-cut and clearly expressed. Lewis, who has seen only the home-duty incidentals of war, is far more confused and uncertain. His attitude to the army oscillates between disgust and fascination. Very consciously left-wing he is anxious to establish the democracy and comradeship of an army in which he recognises the obstacles to both. The attitude is sympathetic, but leads to indifferent writing. He is at his best in the story called *Almost a Gentleman*, the portrait of an O.C.T.U. candidate who fails to get his commission. The study of Burton is free from any preconceptions. He is plausible, ingratiating and pathetic—condemned to the ranks not through any direct snobbery of situation, but because his social background has rendered him truly unsuited to command. This concise and brilliant tragedy is a far grimmer indictment of a class-ridden society than are any of the more obvious tilts at Blimps and gentleman-majors. So far as the actual writing is concerned, Mr. Lewis is again caught between two stools. As an intellectual observer he must write intellectually, but as a democrat and a good chap he is obsessed by the guilt of intellectual isolation.

Unfortunately, good writing is doomed to be as undemocratic as the current level of appreciation. "Jerry planes" are too thin a sugar for Mr. Lewis's pill, and I doubt whether his book will be widely read in the Forces.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

LET MY PEOPLE GO

Out of the House of Bondage. By HENRIETTA BUCKMASTER. *Gollancz.* 15*s.*

The struggle for the abolition of slavery in the United States is a classic example of the vicissitudes and triumph of a moral idea in politics. And the aftermath of the struggle also instructs us that a moral victory is not enough. The negro exchanged one kind of slavery for another when he failed to get land and was treated as a special case in the crucial matter of civil rights. Here, no doubt, Miss Buckmaster leaves the American reader, for whom she is writing, knowing exactly where he is; but the English reader, excited by a dramatic story and mystified by a highly allusive manner, is bound to feel that he has been led to the doorstep of the modern negro problem and left there with a large emotion on his hands and no certainty of what he ought to do about it. And at a time when English curiosity about the status of the American negro is intense. One hopes Miss Buckmaster will continue her story.

At the time of the earliest controversies about negro slavery it was a common impression that this was one of those moral issues which would conveniently settle themselves if they were prodded now and then by moderate reform. In other words, slavery would be found "not to pay." But time, which is supposed to heal, may also spread and aggravate a wound. The necessity of the moral view of politics comes from the fact that interests do not stand still. No one foresaw that the dying institution of slavery would be revived on its deathbed by scientific progress, the discovery of the spinning jenny; and by the 40's and 50's the cause of abolition was webbed in complications which had not confronted the idealists of the eighteenth century and the early Quaker believers in gradualism. In the cotton boom the slaves made men rich; the Southerners told English abolitionists that the South could starve Lancashire; the slave was the distant economic enemy of the northern worker, yet once the slave was a free fugitive, he was no less an enemy, and he was your next-door neighbour. The case of the poor whites cut across the issue. Lincoln himself hesitated long over the Border States and caused abolitionists like Garrison to groan at a situation which looks rather like the one that embarrasses the Allies in their relation to the Algerian Government to-day. The more closely one follows the bewildering currents and cross-currents, as one decade twisted the issue out of the hands of its predecessor, the more one sees how fatal the doctrine of expediency was; and the more one admires firebrands like Garrison, who never for one moment lost sight of his principle or his object. And yet, in the end, one has to admit that the abolition of slavery was swallowed up in the greater issue of secession; that it is bad when your enemies do the widening of the issues; and that moral victories are a mere halo if they do not bring substance and power to the victor. By an irony, what the Abolitionists did, when it came to the test, was to give a moral crown to the cause of American unity; what they achieved in practical terms for the American negro turned out to be the establishment of a principle which could be twisted any way by those with power.

A momentous and indispensable achievement all the same. As Miss Buckmaster says, the seed had been planted and securely planted. In those decades of struggle the negro achieved self-consciousness. The early Quakers showed him he was not alone. The night journeys on the "underground railroad" from "station" to "station," the days spent hiding in the corn concealed in waggons, waiting for the next password, gave the fugitives their first lessons in ingenuity and courage. Their bloody risings gave them the taste of power. The uncertainty of their lives in the North, where, after the emotion of welcome had died down, they might find themselves treated—and with some justice at the time—as interlopers, must have shown them the necessity of depending upon themselves. The first thing a subject race must learn after flight is to return and not be subject. The "railroad," as Miss Buckmaster says, showed the negro, in the course of two generations of travel on it, that there was a way out; and when the reaction came in the South, after Abolition, they went into Kansas in their thousands with the acquired stealthiness of their race. If they could not buy land in the South, they could now go where it could be bought.

The "railroad" is the centrepiece of Miss Buckmaster's narrative. A lot of research has lately been devoted to this great migration in a country of migrations, and she has woven a great deal of this dramatic material into her narrative. We hear the tap on the door at night, the whispers. We see the mild religious men who suddenly became sly in the duplicities of escape and tigers when it came to a fight. The abolitionists began as men with consciences. They sharpened their wits on the law. But long before the Civil War they were in the midst of shootings, beatings and murders. Men like Lundy, Lovejoy and Garrison knew what it was to be besieged in houses and dragged half naked and half dead through the streets by the mob. Lovejoy was murdered. Not the least valuable thing this book does (though it suffers from an impressionism which will seem extreme to the English reader, but which catches the picaresque character of American politics) is to rescue the American abolition movement from the pious atmosphere it has always had in England. There has hardly been any violence or any gaudy buccaneering in English politics since the time of the Chartists; our changes have been discreet and we think quite concretely that appeal to morality is an appeal to order. We are dangerously inclined to believe that other countries, and particularly the Americans, think the same. We must cast our minds back to our own returned Americans, to a man like Cobbett, for example, if we are to grasp the kind of man, the kind of passion and the kind of action which moral causes throw up in America. The swift changes that can occur in the American situation, the wildness of their growth, the taste for personal power in that land of homely presidents and popular eloquence, are factors which are easily forgotten. To Miss Buckmaster, who is a partisan with a picturesque sense of the times, John Brown, for example, is a saint, hero and martyr; but in fairly recent books from the South I have seen it stated that he was a gunman, and a convicted bandit. The fact that he can have been both is not one English readers would willingly accept; but American opinion would not, I am convinced, find the same difficulty. The English reader might wish for a more ordered interpretation of Miss Buckmaster's story, but the very breathlessness of her brilliant impression of the struggle against slavery gives us a valuable introduction to a political climate which is not our own.

V. S. Pritchett

THE FUTURE OF THE PACIFIC

China: The Far East and the Future. By George W. Keeton. *Cape.* 15s.

Informed, readable and thoughtful books on the Far East are rare. It would be too much to expect complete objectivity even from Professor Keeton; it is scarcely his fault if he seems to raise rather than to settle controversies in his careful study first of Chinese nationalism, secondly of Russo-Japanese rivalry, and thirdly of the present position and future prospects in the Pacific. About China Professor Keeton is remarkably fair; about the U.S.S.R. he cannot disguise his mistrust; in the last section, which deals with the immense problems of the Pacific, he thinks, in my view, far too much in terms of Anglo-American domination.

Professor Keeton ends with a valuable introduction to the study, long overdue, of the future of the Pacific. Since he wrote President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill have declared at Casablanca that they will continue the war until Japanese militarism is crushed once and for all. But Professor Keeton looks beyond military victory to the problem of the Pacific as a whole; what settlement will secure the development of the scattered peoples of that area, "free from the twin evils of exploitation and political oppression"? If such a settlement is not part of the Peace Conference at the end of this war, he warns us, "deep-rooted racial antagonisms, liberated and intensified by the war, will be added to the existing difficulties of the twentieth century. If the treaty port system is dead, it is appropriate that the uncontrolled exploitation of the Pacific Islands should be interred along with it."

First consideration is given to China to whom victory will give the position of the leading land Power in the Far East. He discusses three outstanding problems: Outer Mongolia, Sinkiang and Hong Kong. For the first he advocates a joint guarantee by the U.S.S.R. and China; for the second he believes a "declaration that the Soviet has no desire to expand would be a stabilising factor," and for the third he suggests that "Hong Kong might return to Chinese sovereignty, provided that arrangements were made for its use as an Anglo-American-Chinese base in the event of future hostilities in the Pacific," that the Chinese Central Government adequately protects the interests of foreign traders, and that there is the necessary concentration of British naval, military and air forces at Singapore. But why all these qualifications? Hong Kong, as he says, will probably be recaptured by Chinese forces. Why, then, make this special plea for an Anglo-American sphere of influence? Is China never to be given a free choice? It would seem to be unlikely if we may judge by the discussions leading up to the Sino-British Treaty of January 11th, 1943, when, as the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. T. V. Soong, announced at a press conference, the question of Hong Kong was excluded at the express wish of the British Government.

Professor Keeton suggests that a cardinal Allied war aim ought to be the liberation of Korea, and that in view of the peculiar difficulties of Sino-Korean-Japanese relations such independence should be guaranteed by Russia, the United States and Great Britain, and that the same arrangements should be made for Manchuria. In the case of Indo-China and Thailand, he presupposes much closer relations with China, especially commercial relations. France, he assumes, will not regain possession of Indo-China. He wants the naval and air bases of Haiphong and Saigon made available to France, China, Great Britain and the United States in time of war, and the Thai frontier so adjusted as to give British control of the Kraa Isthmus, and unimpeded communications by land between Burma and Malaya. The status of the Philippines he regards as unaffected by the war, although he envisages Anglo-American navies in Manila Bay and Cavite. With all these countries, as well as with the Netherlands Indies (to return to Dutch sovereignty), he forecasts the closer relations of Australia and New Zealand. For the 20,000-odd islands of the Pacific he suggests a Pacific Control Board comprised of representatives of all the Allied Powers, "charged with the duty of administering these islands in such a way as to interfere as little as possible with native aspirations."

Lastly, Professor Keeton deals with the baffling problem of Japan. Again his "blueprint" for the future gives Anglo-American influence a central figure in the design. They will occupy Japan; they will help the establishment of a democratic régime; they will help to reverse recent educational and anti-foreign tendencies. When the outlook and education of the Japanese have been changed, a Pacific Control Board would direct Japanese emigration where

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they would usefully take part in developing the Pacific Basin—presumably where they would not conflict with Britain and America.

Any blue-print for the Pacific is welcomed as the basis of discussion; for most of us are so Atlantic-minded that the Pacific rarely comes within the orbit of our interest. But Professor Keeton, who makes no secret of his desire that the Pacific should become an Anglo-American lake, pays too little attention to the 800 million people living round the Pacific Basin and the 400 millions more round the Indian Ocean, who, he admits, " as the tide is now flowing in the Far East, will not remain in subjection to any Power." And he too easily assumes, with a great deal of wishful thinking, that the interests of British and American capital and trade in the Far East will be identical and that they will be subordinated to a kindly consideration for the millions of potential customers. Or does he assume that once again British and American policy will achieve a precarious balance of power against the U.S.S.R. in the Far East?

DOROTHY WOODMAN

HOW TO READ

How to Read a Page: A Course in Effective Reading with an Introduction to a Hundred Great Words. By I. A. RICHARDS. *Kegan Paul.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

I was faced the other day with the problem of explaining why (although I had been detected reading some of the more highly coloured passages with considerable, if slightly furtive, interest) I did not rate *Gone with the Wind* as a highly accomplished novel. My position, I felt, was weak. I did my best, however, hazarding that, whereas Miss Mitchell had a remarkable gift for vivid straightforward narrative and was a rare hand at splashing in the historical background, scarcely a paragraph of her book (a point I tried to ram home by the possibly rather unfair device of reading aloud several passages with unfriendly emphasis) did not contain the common-place, shop-soiled adjective or the adverb one had learned to expect of a modern romantic novelist at any given juncture. My argument made little progress. To many otherwise intelligent readers, a preoccupation with words for their own sake still seems a particularly sterile form of literary dilettantism; and there is a great gulf between the non-professional reader who values a book for the information it conveys, its " character-drawing," commentary on life in general or the diffused emotional effect it produces on his sensibility, and the professional reader who regards a book as primarily a feat of skill, built up of intractable but living words, with a rhythm that is—or that should be—a harmonious completion of the writer's creative plan.

Yet to read with a love of words is to double the pleasure of reading. To be jealous in the service of words is at once to increase the difficulty of self expression and to heighten the interest of the process by which we grope towards lucidity. Words are like coins, perpetually rubbed down till they lose their original imprint and are withdrawn from circulation. Journalism works havoc with the vocabulary because it uses words again and again, without any knowledge of their history, feeling for their significance or appreciation of the dramatic light-and-shade that, properly handled, they are capable of disengaging. When a word loses its root-meaning, it begins to lose its power. To take an obvious instance, the practice (sanctioned, alas, by Fowler) of writing " averse *to*," in place of " averse *from*," weakens the basic meaning of the word—the sense of turning away—so that it is practically indistinguishable from its various synonyms. To read well, then, is surely to read with some understanding of prose style, or with some attempt to relate the impression a book leaves to the various means that have been employed to hold our interest. In this spirit, I turned hopefully towards Dr. I. A. Richards's manual on *How to Read a Page.* But, at the outset, I must confess to a serious disappointment. It soon became very clear that, before Dr. I. A. Richards can teach me how to read, he must impart the knack of mastering his own individual and (to me, at all events) singularly impenetrable method of writing English. As a prose-writer, he has abundant energy—dealing out his opinions in short lumpy sentences and brief, ungraceful, tightly compressed paragraphs—but none of the art that persuades the intellect by invoking the aesthetic emotions. He deplores the lack of precision in our manner of thinking and writing, but does so in a style that is often the reverse of lucid. Thus, the second examination of a passage is likely to detract from, rather than amplify, the meaning one thought one had gathered at a first perusal: and there have been moments when I found myself demanding, half-irritably, half-shamefacedly, " what *is* this all about?":

> We are all of us learning to read all the time. All our thinking is a part of the process as affecting the way we will on some occasion take some sentence. Whenever we use words in forming some judgment or decision, we are, in what may be a painfully sharp sense, " learning to read." The lover scanning his mistress's scribble or her scowling brows is learning to read. So is the theologian comparing the ideas of *eros* and *agape*. . . . There is an ambiguity here which is brought out by asking, learning to read what?—the written word? or by means of that word the face, or the heart, of Nature? The answer, of course, is, " Both." We cannot separate them. We always read for some purpose. . . . There is no such thing as merely reading words; always through the words we are trafficking or trying to traffic with things. . . .

The foregoing extract—its odd rhythm and rather elaborate informality—can be paralleled by many other passages of Dr. I. A. Richards's handbook. With an air of amicable authority it imparts a number of facts that to most of us must seem tolerably self-evident—that our reading is connected with our other intellectual activities and with our experience of life as a whole: that " we always read for some purpose": that behind words are things. What next? Dr. Richards proceeds to explain that there are certain key-words (the " Hundred Great Words" mentioned on his title page) covering a very wide range of ideas and capable of being used with what he calls " systematic ambiguity." These, he tells us, are " *the most important words* for two reasons"; because " they cover the ideas we can least avoid using . . ." and because " they are words we are forced to use in explaining other words." And he goes on to print a short list (including for good measure a hundred and three) which begins with *Amount*, *Argument*, *Art*, *Be*, *Beautiful*, *Belief* at one end of the alphabet, and concludes with *Use*, *Way*, *Wise*, *Word*, *Work* at the other. A step forward, and we dip down into the haunted wood of philological metaphysics. Dr. I. A. Richards selects a number of knotty passages, ranging from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and the *Phaedo* to Collingwood on cats, proposing that we should analyse our response to important words and check it against the analysis he himself provides. To follow in detail such a line of research is outside the scope, and certainly beyond the capacity, of a periodical reviewer. He must record his impression, however, that the way is dark and long: that the *Posterior Analytics*, translated into the beastly jargon of Basic English, do not gain in immediate comprehensibility: and that the general effect of the expository chapters is dim and interwoven, with an occasional golden twig shining here and there to light us on our road.

At last, we emerge—to what conclusions? From the point of view of the general reader, to whom one had hoped fondly this practical guide

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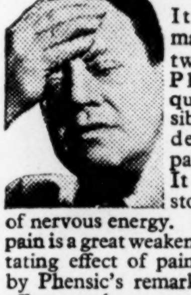

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DOES NOT HARM THE HEART

to reading might have been addressed, Professor Richards' last section, *Retrospect*, may prove far the most interesting. As counterblast to "the doctrine *of usage*," which would assign to each word its fixed appropriate meaning, he enunciates his belief that "words get their values from their togetherness and enter into infinitely subtler and more manifold relations to one another than any addition can represent," and that through his "awareness of interdependence"—the interdependence of key words and the ideas they stand for—the reader may learn to read well and, after a time, acquire the gift of thinking wisely, till heart and head make peace, and reason returns to earth. Meanwhile, cannot Professor Richards allow himself a holiday from semantics, and gratify us with a chapter at least on the aesthetic side of the problem? PETER QUENNELL

Cripps—Advocate and Rebel. By PATRICIA STRAUSS. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This is a pleasant biography, written on a popular level; it contains no "revelations" about Cripps and aims at no profound analysis. It is sensible, readable and knowledgable. It deals best with Sir Stafford as a lawyer and as a politician during the pre-war period of the United Front and the petition. Mrs. Strauss was in these movements and understands them well. The chapter on Sir Stafford's India mission, which has clearly been added at the last minute, is entirely superficial, but the appendices which have also been added provide as useful documentation Sir Stafford's correspondence with Azad and the broadcast, which added so much to his fame when he came back from Russia. Mrs. Strauss greatly admires Stafford Cripps, but without hero-worship. She says she appreciates his courage, his integrity, his high-mindedness; she complains of "his tendency to over-emphasise the importance of personal influence in political affairs and to under-emphasise the social forces of which the individual is a symbol." She also comments on his "aloofness," and quotes the complaint of people who have worked with him that he does not say "thank you," and seems insensitive to changes of feeling and atmosphere. Certainly he would have done better as leader of the House of Commons if he had had more sensitive antennæ. He is by all accounts the greatest lawyer of our day, one of the greatest advocates Britain has ever had. He has gifts which at moments reveal him as a leader of greater mental and moral stature than those around him. But he never seems to know whether he is talking to the judge or the jury; his argument stands whatever the audience. And in a modern democracy the jury comes first.

Week-end Competitions

No. 685

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes to the amount of four guineas are offered for clerihews about architecture—competitors can express themselves about either styles or individual buildings.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 682

Set by G. W. Stonier

The usual prizes are offered for a twelve-line poem designed to be illustrated by one of the following: Thurber, Low, Ardizzone, Osbert Lancaster or H. M. Bateman.

•

Report by G. W. Stonier

Innumerable Lows: conference tables, glimpses into the life and death of Blimp, emblematic scenes in poster style. Batemans: a recruit calls the sergeant "chum," or someone walks out of *Mrs. Miniver*. Lancasters: architecture, slim guardees and clumping Waafs, butterflies talking. Thurbers: pulpy outlines and fishy reticences, the voice from the subconscious, sex war at its most intense since Strindberg. And I should have liked to add to this list, with its appropriate triumphs, Ardizzone's tarts and coves, but for some reason competitors failed to cotton on to Ardizzone. The winners, dividing the prizes equally, are The White Queen, P. F. A. Watkins, F. H. King, Robert Upcott and G. de V.

PRIZES.

FAMILY LIFE, BY JAMES THURBER.
Brown's wife, herself a normal type,
Who talks too much—and always tripe,
Is much perturbed because her spouse
Seems to have private thoughts—the louse!
Successfully she stopped his drinking,
But how can she prevent him thinking?
And how wipe off that secret smile
That rouses all her bitter bile?
For no reproach, however ruddy,
Disturbs the man in his brown study.
There in a corner, mute, alone,
He hugs the soul he calls his own.
(THE WHITE QUEEN)

DAVID LOW: SEPTEMBER 30, 1938.
There was a town of putsch and beer
And in the town a Braunes Haus,
And in this house without a fear
Four gents went in amidst applause.

Adolf, he was the smiling host,
Benito, who came from Italy,
Neville, the umbrella ghost,
Edouard, with cheerful misery.

A crash! then opened wide the door,
There stood a man of irony,
He saw the globe upon the floor,
Said Stalin: "*What, no chair for me?*"
(P. F. A. WATKINS)

LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES for Osbert Lancaster.
Bookshop: Charing Cross Road.
A row of books where one may rest one's eyes on
A New Apocalypse or Old Horizon;
Or, if such study palls, where one may wait
The advent of the Nearly Good and Great.
Two Poets of To-morrow here address
A Lady published by the Fortune Press.
The B.B.C., the Stage, in search of *Ton*
Extol (but do not purchase) Aragon.
Or else—in haste—the search for Daylight brings
The busy Layman and some Ballet things.
Now from these books and faces learn the cost
In terms of Culture, should the war be lost.
(F. H. KING)

TO BE ILLUSTRATED BY OSBERT LANCASTER.
Count Orgaz is buried,
And the Residenz is shut,
And the Grosse Kurfürst curvets
Over Panzertruppen, but
There'll always be an England
To maintain the rule of taste;
Where every style is given a trial,
And nothing is left to waste.
Sing hey the merry Regent Street,
Sing ho, Trafalgar Square,
A stately pile for the rank and file
Wins hands down everywhere.
(ROBERT UPCOTT)

A LADY ADDRESSES A FEMALE FRIEND ON THE SUBJECT OF HER PET.
(To be illustrated by Thurber.)
This gentle dog, serene and bland,
Who sniffs, with charming smile, my hand,
Is so refined.

Most odours seem to him quite coarse;
He cannot bear the smell of horse,
Or bacon rind.

The only perfume he can bear
Is *Quelques Houris*, which I wear,
Or *Mange Ce Lotos*.

But if he turns and sniffs at you,
It's just *nostalgie de la boue*.
So take no notice. (G. DE V.)

Company Meeting

UNITED KINGDOM PROVIDENT INSTITUTION

SIR ERNEST BENN'S STATEMENT

THE Annual General Meeting of the members of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution will be held on March 24 at the Head Office, 196, Strand, London, W.C.

The following is extracted from the statement of the chairman (Sir Ernest J. P. Benn, Bt.) circulated with the report and accounts:

We have maintained the general attitude outlined in my speeches ever since the outbreak of war. Victory is our first consideration, and we have in your name done everything within the capabilities of a life assurance office to facilitate the national war effort.

Such business as we have written during 1942 is confined to the very highest class.

Our expense ratio has fallen to the low figure of 12.5 per cent. Our rate of interest shows a very moderate fall considering our very large holdings of War Loans. Our mortality experience, notwithstanding war deaths, has been favourable, both as regards numbers and amounts of claims, the Temperance Section again showing a marked superiority.

Your assets are still calculated on 1938 values. We have ignored the substantial statistical appreciation caused by a national, closed, controlled and planned economy, because that appreciation is directly due to war, and we have yet to learn the effects of wartime plans on peacetime values. Our liabilities, as explained last year, are calculated on the more stringent basis then adopted. The balance-sheet thus displays a degree of security.

If the Government fails to raise sufficient revenue by taxation and genuine borrowing to meet its heavy commitments, and has to resort to the expedient of printing new paper currency or borrowing new sums from the banks, nothing can prevent a further fall in the value of our money. Unless, therefore, the people will make up their minds to increase still further their investments in War Loan, it is difficult to see how the mounting inflation can be stemmed.

We have always regarded our institution and its work as high-grade social service. When the needs of war have been satisfied, it is permissible to apply remaining energies to the maintenance of the peacetime social and economic structure. Too large a part of the national expenditure of £14,000,000 a day is used for novel, experimental and extraneous plans and purposes, some of them having nothing whatever to do with the prosecution of hostilities. The use of wartime powers to transfer men and money from established forms of trade and service for other than strictly war purposes should surely be avoided.

The British insurance market has its own post-war plans ready. It is prepared, from the very moment when peace arrives, to resume all those services to our own people, and to the peoples of the whole world for which British insurance is famed, and which cannot be so well performed by any other market, agency, or plan.

FIRE AND ACCIDENT SUBSIDIARY

The United Kingdom Fire and Accident Company, now in its third year, is justifying our high expectations. As was anticipated, our members are finding convenience in the widened services offered at our branches, and also appreciate the advantage of placing their fire and general business with an office belonging to the mutual institution in which each has his or her full share of interest.

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